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TO

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The joy of smashing Windows

Hey, remember Vista? What about well-intentioned but extremely irritating User Account Control (UAC), which questioned everything you tried to do, from running a program to changing a setting? UAC was 'toned down' in Windows 7, but it was still a big mistake by Microsoft because it implied that the user didn't know what they were doing.

In this issue's cover feature (page 38), we explain how to bypass other restrictions that Windows imposes, from hiding useful settings to locking files. We're not encouraging you to run riot on your PC, just

to wrest control of it when required.

If hacking Windows isn't enough for you, how about hacking your home to control your lighting, heating and mains power using your phone? Find out more in our Weekend Project on page 58.

Finally, congratulations to Spencer Hawkins from Guildford for being the first reader to find all five eggs in our Easter issue. A *Web User* mug is on its way!

Robert Irvine

robert_irvine@dennis.co.uk

#webuser



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Average sales, Jan-Dec 2014, 29,057 copies per issue

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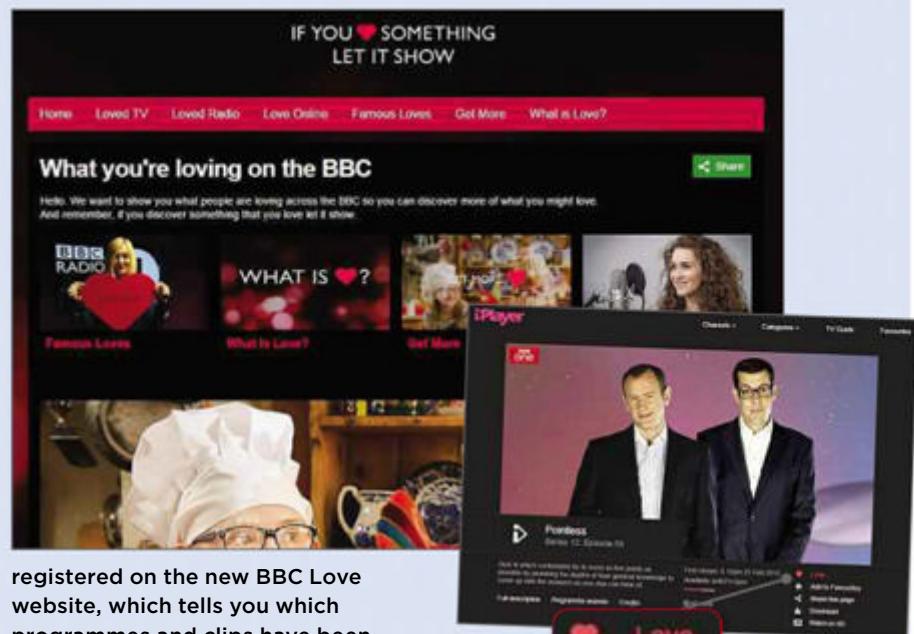
What's New Online

Get more personalised recommendations from the BBC

From YouTube to Amazon to Spotify, websites have always tried to win your loyalty by recommending other things you may like, based on your preferences. The BBC has never been great at this, but it hopes its new heart-shaped 'love' button will improve things.

Clicking the button, which appears at the bottom of the browser version of the iPlayer, and TV and radio programme pages, tells the BBC you're very fond of that show. The BBC will then suggest other content you may like. So, for example, if you 'love' *Horizon*, you may be recommended other science shows on radio and TV, or news stories about technology.

However, you won't receive any personal recommendations yet because the BBC is still working out how best to do this (read more on the 'About the BBC' blog: bit.ly/love368). Instead, for now, every time you click the heart your approval will be



registered on the new BBC Love website, which tells you which programmes and clips have been 'loved' the most, a bit like the BBC's equivalent of Twitter's trends. It also shows recommendations from "famous people, experts and opinion formers",

providing a handy snapshot of what's popular.
www.bbc.co.uk/love

Guess Google's autocomplete results

www.googlefeud.com

Google Feud is a new game that turns the company's autocomplete search suggestions into a *Family Fortunes*-style challenge. You have to guess the top 10 results in four categories: Culture, People, Names and Questions. The last of these is the most fun, forcing you to enter the mindset of

people asking 'What if I ate...' and 'Where can I buy human...'. The legal disclaimer says the game "is not endorsed by or affiliated with Google", but hopefully the company's lawyers won't try to close it down.

Vote for the UK's national bird

www.votenationalbird.com

You have two important decisions to make before 7 May. One is to choose who to vote for in the General Election, but a more important duty for some people will be the chance to help elect the UK's national bird. It's a poll being run by David Lindo, who runs the excellent Urban Birder website (www.theurbanbirder.com). When voting ends on 7 May, he will contact the new Government to see if he can persuade it to make the winning bird official.

Maybe your political persuasion will sway your choice. If you're Labour, will you vote for the red kite? If you're Tory, will you choose the bluetit? There are eight other birds in the poll, including the blackbird, kingfisher and robin, which was named our national bird in an unofficial survey run in the Sixties by *The Times*. Will it win again?

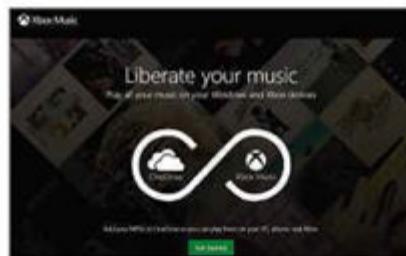


We highlight 10 of the most amazing and amusing things you can do on the web this fortnight

Play OneDrive tracks via Xbox Music

music.xbox.com/Onedrive

Microsoft now lets you store music on OneDrive, then play it through Xbox Music, offering a similar service to that which Apple provides with iTunes Match and Google with Play Music. You simply upload tracks to your Music folder in OneDrive. However, it's only available to people using Windows 8.1 PCs or mobile devices.



Explore Mount Everest in Street View

bit.ly/everest368

If you're planning to climb the world's highest mountain, you'll need some help from the Sherpas who live at its base. Google's latest collection of Street View images captures their communities of Thame, Khumjung, Phortse, Lukla and Namche Bazaar, where you'll see monasteries, schools, lodges and yaks in the shadow of Everest. Click the link above to go straight to the images on Street View, and read more about the Sherpas on Google's Lat-Long blog: bit.ly/blog368.



Upload 360-degree videos to YouTube

bit.ly/tube368

YouTube is preparing for a future in which we all have a virtual-reality headset by letting you upload your own 360-degree videos. When you watch these, you can change the angle by dragging your mouse (on a



PC), or by tilting your phone or tablet. Click the link above to find out which 360-degree cameras are compatible with YouTube.

5

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Advice for parents and teachers on keeping children safe online

[@SatisfyingGif](#)

A sublime collection of "oddly satisfying" GIFs from the web



Read Google Docs full screen

[bit.ly/docs368](#)

With a tap of your screen, you can now make documents appear full-screen in Google Docs. Just double-tap the screen or tap the blue pencil icon to make the toolbar at the top disappear. See how it works at [bit.ly/docsapp368](#).

Sync iPlayer across devices

[bit.ly/bbcid368](#)

By signing into the Android or iOS app for iPlayer using your BBC iD, you can sync your favourite shows and viewing history across devices. Register for a BBC iD by clicking the link above.

Activate God Mode in Netflix

[bit.ly/godmode368](#)

Scrolling through Netflix content on your PC is a pain because you have to hover your cursor over the side arrows. Fix this by installing the unofficial God Mode bookmarklet, which then shows entire sections.



Need to Know

BT returns to mobile with low-cost 4G service

What happened?

BT launched its first mobile service since it quit the market 13 years ago, offering 4G contracts from as little as £5 a month. BT Mobile is a virtual mobile network, which means customers will get their bills and support from BT, but their calls, texts and data will be handled by EE. This means they'll be able to enjoy high-speed internet for an impressively low price.

The cheapest deal costs £5 per month and is only available to existing customers, such as those on a BT TV or broadband package. For everyone else, the cheapest contract is £10 per month. You can expect 4G speeds of up to 30Mbps. BT Mobile users will also get access to BT's five million Wi-Fi hotspots for free.

At the moment, the contracts are all SIM-only, so you can't yet get a handset from BT unless you buy it outright. There are four models available - the Samsung Galaxy S5, Samsung Galaxy Ace 4, Samsung Galaxy S4 Mini and the Huawei Ascend Y550 - and if you're a BT customer, you get a £50 discount. Of course, you can also use your own phone, if it's unlocked.

The contracts also include access to Premier League football matches that BT has the rights to show. BT already offers this perk to its broadband customers, but you can now get it just by signing up for the mobile service.

BT is currently in the process of buying EE, the 4G operator that's a joint venture between Orange and T-Mobile.



BT Mobile contracts start from as little as £5 for existing customer



The deal is worth £12.5 billion, but it's being challenged by some rival firms. BT previously owned mobile operator Cellnet, but spun it off in 2002 as O2.

BT has its own 4G frequency but will run BT Mobile entirely via EE's network. It said it intends to use its own 2.6GHz frequency to help boost reception inside buildings using low-power base stations called femtocells.

How does this affect you?

If you're a BT customer, the new mobile service could save you a bundle. At first glance, the £5 a month tariff doesn't appear to offer much but, if you don't make many calls, it's a good deal. It lasts for a year and includes 500MB of 4G data, unlimited texts and 200 minutes a month. If you're not already on a BT contract, this will cost £10 a month.

BT Mobile also offers 2GB of data, unlimited texts and 500 minutes of calls at £12 a month for BT customers and £17 a month for everyone else. For £20 a month for customers and £25 for everyone else, the contracts include a whopping 20GB of data and unlimited texts and minutes. In comparison, Three's SIM-only £13 a month contract includes only 1GB of data, unlimited

texts and 600 minutes of calls; while its £18 contract includes 4GB of data, 600 minutes of calls and unlimited texts.

What do we think?

With T-Mobile and Orange combined to form EE, and Three and O2 set to join forces, the number of players in the UK mobile market is shrinking. Usually, when that happens, competition falters and prices start climbing. So we're delighted to see BT pushing costs down even before it officially acquires EE. The UK mobile market is already diverse thanks to other virtual networks, such as GiffGaff, and Sky looks set to launch another service. The fact that speeds are increasing as prices are decreasing is good news for everyone.

On the downside, BT frequently comes out badly in Ofcom's list of the most complained-about ISPs, while EE has trailed in the rankings for mobile services, which could make BT Mobile a bad combination. In fairness, BT has recently renewed its efforts to improve its customer service. There's more to mobile contracts than price and, as important as it is to keep costs down, providers also need to deliver a good service with adequate support.

What we think of this fortnight's top tech stories and rumours

Microsoft pre-installs Office on Android

What happened?

Android phones and tablets are about to get even more useful, with many major manufacturers signing up to pre-install Microsoft Office apps on their devices. Popular tools such as Word, Excel, PowerPoint and OneNote will be included on hardware from Samsung and Dell, among others. However, before you get too excited, we should point out that the apps aren't the full versions and have limited functionality, so you'll still need to pay for an Office 365 subscription to get the rest of the features. Some devices, including Samsung's new Galaxy S6 phone, may also come with Skype built-in.

How will it affect you?

Currently, most Android devices don't come with office apps pre-installed,

so it will certainly be handy to have useful tools such as Word and Excel from the off, especially considering that Microsoft Office is the most widely used office software. Sadly, the apps are, at the moment, mostly designed for minor edits and reading documents on the move. If you want the full set of features, you'll have to shell out £80 annually. If you're already on an Office 365 subscription plan, you can use it on your mobile device for no additional cost.

What do we think?

Microsoft is making a clear effort to bring Office to as many devices as possible, but it may be too little, too late for many of us. If all you need to do is type documents or manage basic spreadsheets, there are lots of free options including Google Docs and Sheets, and WPS Office (formerly Kingsoft Office). It's good news, though, if you use Microsoft at work, because you now won't need to master a new office app and can easily view documents on the go. It's a smart move by Microsoft to keep itself relevant in the face of growing competition, but it's a shame the company is pushing us to pay for Office 365 subscriptions to get the full value from these apps.

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Twitter adds filter to tackle trolls



What happened?

Anyone sick of seeing abusive messages or offensive language on Twitter will soon be able to filter it from their feeds automatically. The social network has responded to constant complaints about trolls by introducing a new 'quality filter' that will automatically remove abusive language, personal threats and messages from suspicious accounts. So far, the feature is only available to verified users.

filter to everyone. In the meantime, if you're seeing more abuse than you can handle, you should 'mute' the offender and report them to Twitter. Click the cog icon in their profile and select Report, 'They're being abusive or harmful'.

What do we think?

It's good to see Twitter continuing to battle trolls, especially because the abuse and bullying have made many users quit the site. We welcome anything that makes Twitter a more pleasant place without removing the open and lively discussion that gives the site its appeal.



How will it affect you?

If you're a prominent public figure with a verified account, this feature should already be available to you. The rest of us will just have to wait until Twitter rolls out the quality



Channel 4 relaunches TV-streaming service

What happened?

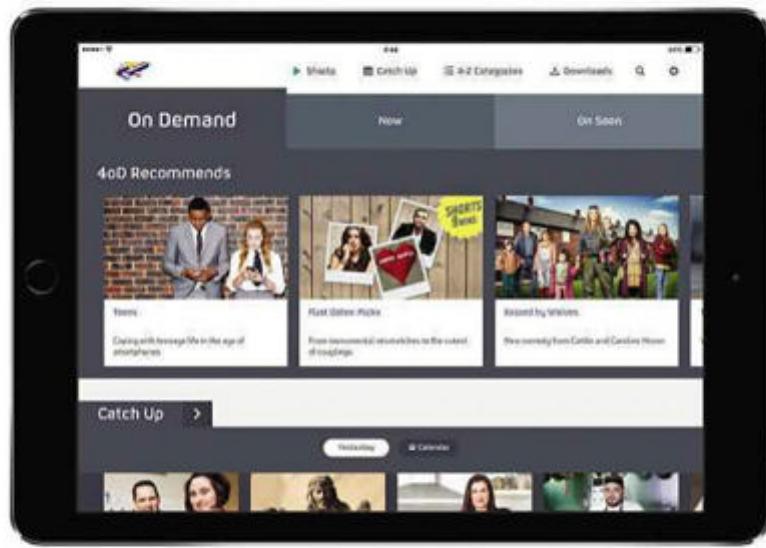
Channel 4 unveiled its new on-demand streaming platform, All 4 (www.channel4.com/All4), which replaces the existing service, 4oD. All 4 is designed as a hub for all the broadcaster's digital content and is divided into three sections: On Demand, Now and Soon.

The first of these works much like 4oD, letting you catch up with shows that have already been screened on Channel 4, E4 and More 4, as well as box sets (full series and themed collections) and short films made exclusively for 4oD.

The Now category lets you stream selected Channel 4 shows live, which you could previously do in the Desktop version of 4oD, but not on mobile devices. You'll also be able to interact with popular shows such as *Hollyoaks* and *Gogglebox* as they're broadcast.

The Soon section lets you watch promos and previews of forthcoming programmes, and set reminders so you don't miss them.

It's also now easier to download shows so you can view them offline. And, of course, all the content is free to watch, but ad-supported.



How will it affect you?

If you found the 4oD app fiddly and buggy to use – and judging by the bad reviews on the app stores, you wouldn't be the only one – the launch of All 4 will be great news, because it shows the broadcaster is finally putting some thought into what today's viewers want. By bringing its catch-up, live and future shows together in one place, Channel 4 is effectively creating a more modern and flexible alternative to watching its programming on a TV. The bad news is that All 4 is currently only available on desktops and iOS, so

unlucky Android users are stuck with 4oD until later this year.

What do we think?

We're delighted that Channel 4 is making an effort to catch up with BBC iPlayer, which has long combined catch-up, live and exclusive online content. All 4's interface is smart, easy to use and a suitable showcase for the broadcaster's programming, which appears to be improving after a dry few years. Hopefully, ITV, which is still a long way behind the Beeb and Channel 4, will follow suit.



FIRST LOOK

Nexus Player

www.google.co.uk/nexus/player

The Nexus Player is Google's answer to Apple TV. It offers its own built-in apps and lets you cast content from an Android tablet or phone to your TV. Since it runs the full Android TV operating system, it has much more potential to take over your living room than the Chromecast, which is very good value for money but has some shortcomings.

The small, round and sturdy box has a diameter of just 83mm, so it's unobtrusive when placed next to your TV. Unlike the Chromecast, which can be powered by your TV's USB slot, it needs to be plugged into a power socket. You'll also find an HDMI output (cable not included) and a



micro USB port for adding more storage. There's no Ethernet port, but the player uses 802.11ac Wi-Fi, which supports higher speeds than the Chromecast, and you can use a micro USB-to-Ethernet adapter if you don't have access to a wireless network.

Once it's set up, the Nexus Player is controlled by an incredibly simple Bluetooth remote, which is particularly handy if you'd prefer to keep the player out of sight. As well as five control

buttons, there's a Microphone button to control the box via voice commands, and if you don't want to use the remote, you can control it using your Android device.

Android TV uses the Material Design styling of Android Lollipop and navigating its menus is a pleasure, thanks to the device's quad-core processor. Unfortunately, all this was undermined by the lack of content. While it's possible to cast from your Android device, there were few native apps available, with the exception of YouTube and Netflix. Indeed, there were no catch-up TV apps whatsoever and no sign of other popular services such as Spotify and Now TV. We'd suggest waiting to see which developers get their apps working for Android TV before rushing out and buying the Nexus Player.



WHAT'S THE RUMOUR

Will the iPhone 6s and 7 both launch this year?

Reports suggest that Apple is speeding up its smartphone update cycle, meaning we could see two iPhone launches this year. It's claimed that the company is potentially preparing the release of one handset - the iPhone 6S - during the first half of 2015, and then another - the iPhone 7 - in Apple's usual launch

spot for its new handset: September.

"The new schedule is expected to stagger the releases of two devices in 2015 to capitalise on sales," reported Mail Online (bit.ly/iphones368). "Apple could release the iPhone 6S to people who want to upgrade to a slightly cheaper model, before announcing its flagship iPhone 7 in the autumn."

However, there's been little evidence to back up these claims and although the idea of Apple staggering its handset releases does make sense - because this would give it two distinct sales periods instead of one - it could just be hearsay and yet more speculation in the never-ending saga of "this is what the next iPhone will be like".

Contradicting the rumour are reports



from China that say Apple is set to begin mass production of the iPhone 6S in June 2015 with the aim of having 230 million units ready for retailers in September. Indeed, it seems more likely that Apple will stick to its S-then-full-version cycle, which means you have until 2016 to save your

pennies for an iPhone 7. Admittedly, this could change, but why mess with a winning formula?

LIKELIHOOD RATING



It's that time of year when new iPhone rumours start circulating, even though many users are still getting to grips with the iPhone 6 and 6 Plus. With the Apple Watch also due out this month, we don't believe the company will want to overload the market with another handset just yet, although it's also true that Apple likes to spring surprises.



What's new on Kickstarter

Our favourite new project on the crowdfunding site

CodeBug

bit.ly/codebug368 | From £10

Coding projects often look intimidating, so we think CodeBug is a marvellous way to get people programming. It's a cute, customisable computer that you can program yourself and then wear as a badge that lights up with your personal message. Just visit the CodeBug website to create your program in a few clicks, then connect the bug to your PC to bring it to life. There are further projects on the site to help you develop your coding skills. CodeBug hopes to raise £12,000 by 27 April, and aims to deliver its bugs to backers the following month.



WEBOMETER

WE LIKE...

↑ Amazon Launches Fire TV Stick in UK

Amazon has launched its media-streaming stick in the UK for £35. Like the original Fire TV, it runs Fire OS and can be used to stream Netflix, YouTube and Amazon's Prime Instant Video, as well as photos and music.



↑ Apple boss to giveaway his fortune

Apple's CEO, Tim Cook, has promised to donate his \$800 million (£530 million) fortune to good causes before he dies. The tech mogul has already given away more than \$100 million away, including \$50 million to the HIV/AIDS charity Product Red.



WE DON'T LIKE...

↓ Most hotels have insecure Wi-Fi networks



Eight out of the top 10 international hotel chains use InnGate routers, which can easily be hacked, according to a researcher at security firm Cylance. The hardware's flaws could potentially allow attackers to upload malware to guests' computers over Wi-Fi.

↓ Samsung Galaxy S6 contains masses of bloatware



Contrary to rumours that Samsung's Galaxy S6 would contain less bloatware than its previous flagship phones, it's been revealed that the new handset comes with 56 pre-installed applications that can't be removed.



Stay Safe Online

News about the latest threats and advice from security experts

SECURITY ALERT! | What's been bothering us this fortnight

Spammers target Apple customers

Spammers are using emails that appear to have been sent by Apple to steal customers' login credentials and banking information, according to security firm Bitdefender.

Victims are tricked into clicking a link in the messages that takes them to a web page where they are asked to enter their Apple ID and password, followed by account information including a credit card number and its security number and expiration date.

bit.ly/apple368



Google Play apps to be tested by humans

Following a major change to the way it handles app submissions, Google has announced that it will manually

review apps before they are submitted to the Play store to protect consumers and improve the quality of its app catalogue. Although the company will now employ a dedicated team of experts to identify apps that violate its developer policies, it insists that Android developers will still be able to get their apps made available on the store within a couple of hours. Those developers whose apps are rejected will also be given an explanation as to why they failed to meet the requirements.

bit.ly/google368

750,000 fake Twitter accounts used by one scammer

One man used as many as 750,000 Twitter accounts to trick victims into buying fake weight-loss pills, according to security firm Symantec. The scammer, who stood to earn as much as \$60 for every victim who signed up to a trial of 'Green coffee bean



extract', used a sophisticated scheme involving impersonation accounts and fake followers to avoid anti-spam measures, attract real followers and spread the bogus tweets.

bit.ly/twitterscam368

Half of Android devices susceptible to silent attack



A vulnerability affecting Android versions 4.1 and earlier could allow attackers to replace a seemingly safe app with malware during installation, according to an engineer at Palo Alto Networks. The attack, which is known as Android Installer Hijacking, only affects apps downloaded from third-party app stores such as the Amazon App Store and hasn't yet been seen in the wild. Nonetheless, companies including Google, Amazon and Samsung are working to fix the vulnerability.

bit.ly/androidattack368

Security Helpdesk | Your questions answered by security specialists

THIS ISSUE'S EXPERT:
Ben Williams, Head of Operations at Adblock Plus (adblockplus.org)



Q Why does Adblock Plus use more memory than any of my other add-ons?

Andrew O'Donnell, Twitter

For normal usage this shouldn't cause a significant problem on your system. However, if you want to squeeze every ounce of performance out of your machine - or if you're running Adblock Plus on an older computer - you'll be pleased to hear that we're working on fixing the problem. All our issues are open to the public; you can see the one devoted to improving memory use at issues.adblockplus.org/ticket/145

A When you're running Adblock Plus, the ad-blocking filters have to be run through your memory.

Q Are all adverts from Google and Microsoft now allowed by Adblock Plus?

Louise Holt, Twitter

A No, they're not automatically allowed. Search ads and sponsored results that appear on Google and its 'AdSense for Search' partner sites qualify for our Acceptable Ads program, so you will see those ads if you have the 'Allow non-intrusive advertising' option selected in Adblock Plus. With Microsoft, Bing search ads are also now taking part in our Acceptable Ads initiative, so those are allowed, too.

Q Why does the Adblock Plus app for Android still let through lots of ads?

Ryan Boyle, Facebook

A As long as your Android phone or tablet is rooted, you shouldn't be experiencing these problems. Try consulting our forum (adblockplus.org/forum) to find an answer. My best guess is that you are still seeing ads because your phone or tablet might not be rooted. On non-rooted devices, you need to set up a proxy on each wireless connection on which you use Adblock Plus, because it doesn't (yet) work over mobile connections. There are instructions for configuring the app at bit.ly/adblock368.



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1&1

1and1.co.uk



Best New Websites

Site of the Fortnight

HOLIDAYS

RELAUNCH

easyJet Holidays

www.easyjet.com/holidays

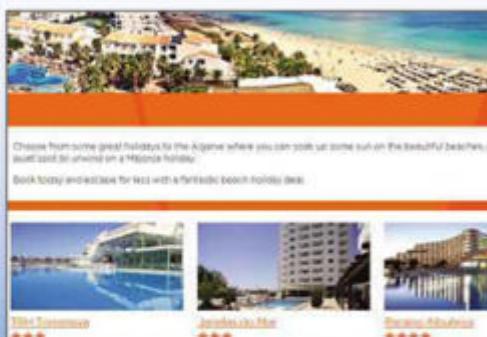
Book a low-cost holiday with a brand you trust at the relaunched easyJet Holidays, which has just upgraded from a travel agent to a tour operator. It now offers its own package holidays (in partnership with hotel-booking site Hotelopia) in dozens of destinations, from Andorra to Turkey. The site's smarter design and improved navigation provides options to browse by destination, airport and special offers. Although easyJet's trademark orange colour scheme is hardly classy, it's now offset by larger photos and clearer presentation of hotel and flight info. It can't yet compete with big tour operators such as Thomson, but it's getting closer.

Our rating



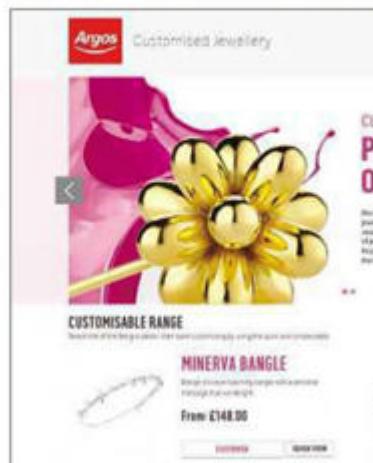
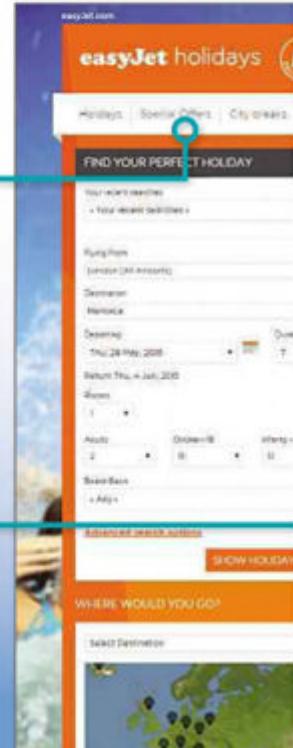
SPECIAL OFFERS

Browse the latest hotel and holiday bargains



BEACH

Find a holiday with sun, sea, sand and sangria



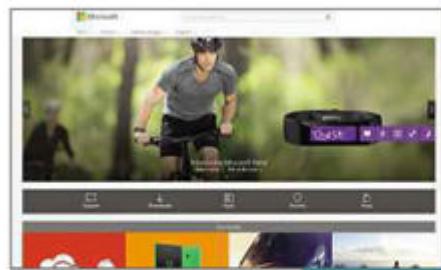
JEWELLERY

Argos Customised Jewellery

custom.argos.co.uk

As we reported last issue, Argos has launched a new service that lets you create your own jewellery using 3D-printing technology. You can currently choose from 11 items, including rings, pendants and earrings, which you can customise to your taste. There are options to select the material, size and texture; add a name or message; and in some cases 'morph' the material into a new design. The product photos update automatically with your choices, and can be rotated through 360 degrees so you know exactly what you're getting. With prices ranging from £55 to £120, it's a great way to buy someone the perfect, personalised gift.

Our rating



TECHNOLOGY

Microsoft

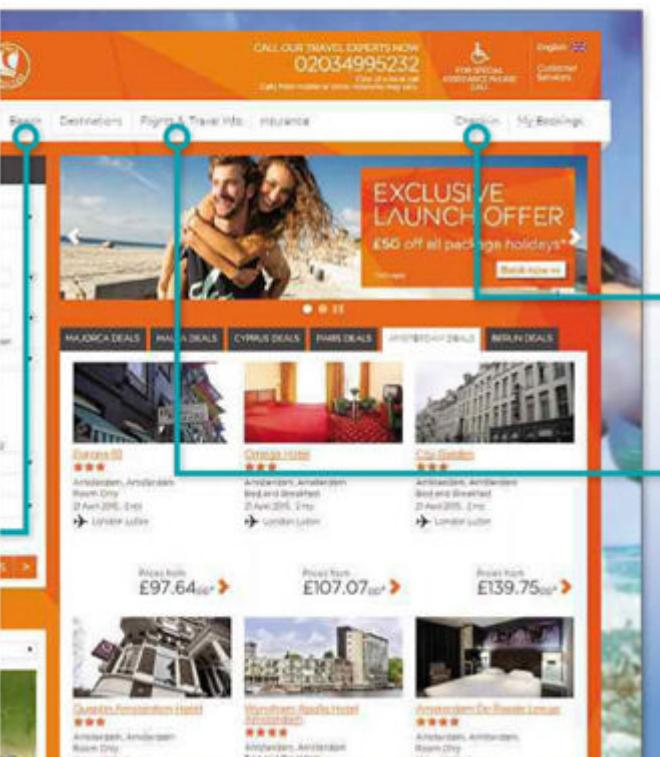
www.microsoft.com

Microsoft's redesigned homepage doesn't look radically different but there are a few notable changes. The Entertainment menu has disappeared; there are more Metro-style tiles for products and services; and you can now access the Support, Downloads and Apps sections with a single click. Below these, Microsoft has thoughtfully provided a 'Recommended for you' section, although we suspect its suggestions (such as Windows and Office) are the same for everyone. Still, it's a swish, colourful site that does a good job of uniting the company's ever-expanding portfolio.

Our rating



We review this fortnight's best new and relaunched websites and rate them for content, design and features



The easyJet website features a prominent orange header with contact information and links for flight status, assistance, and customer services. Below the header is a navigation bar with links to 'Destinations', 'Flight & Travel Info', 'Insurance', 'Check-in', and 'My Bookings'. A large banner at the top highlights an 'EXCLUSIVE LAUNCH OFFER' with a discount on package holidays. The main content area displays various travel deals, including 'MAJORCA DEALS', 'MALLORCA DEALS', 'CYPRUS DEALS', 'PHAROS DEALS', 'ATHENS/CRETE DEALS', and 'BERLIN DEALS'. Each deal includes a thumbnail image, destination, departure date, and price.



The easyJet online check-in form is titled 'Check-in online'. It requires the passenger's surname ('Irvine') and booking reference ('EMSHN25'). There is a checkbox for confirming permission to check-in other passengers or that the user is the only passenger. A 'CHECK-IN NOW' button is at the bottom.

CHECK-IN
There's no
airport check-in
so you have to
do so online

**FLIGHT &
TRAVEL INFO**
Make sure your
flight is
scheduled to
depart on time



The easyJet Flight Tracker tool allows users to find flights by entering a departure airport (London Gatwick) and a destination airport (Paris CDG). The search results are displayed below the input fields.



The relaunched Miniclip website features a clean, modern design. The top navigation bar includes links for 'Home', 'Games', 'Puzzles', 'Sports', 'Arcade', 'Strategy', 'Card Games', 'Casual Games', and 'More Games'. A large central banner for 'JEWEL Academy' is followed by a grid of smaller game thumbnails. A 'RELAUNCH' badge is visible in the bottom right corner.

GAMES

Miniclip

www.miniclip.com

The popular games website has a new look, which feels fresher and faster, but it has retained the familiar layout, which should please its 70 million users. The most notable change is a revamped profile bar at the top of the page, which includes notifications and social features that let you challenge friends to 8 Ball Pool, Tanki Online and other multiplayer games. We also like that the game window has been enlarged and the improved comments facility that lets users report bugs. Best of all is Miniclip's switch from Flash to HTML5, which provides a much smoother experience.

RELAUNCH



Movements is a platform for crowdsourcing human rights. The website features a banner with the text 'Crowdsourcing human rights.' and a call-to-action button 'Get involved'. Below the banner, there are sections for 'Help us spread the word', 'Meet our supporters', and 'Movements.org'.

ACTIVISM

Movements

www.movements.org

Describing itself as a "crowdsourcing human rights platform", Movements is a simple but commendable site that gives a voice to people in closed societies. Activists can sign up to request help from journalists, lawyers, technology experts and anyone else willing to provide their skills, and you can register yourself to contribute, as well as highlight causes on social media. Browsing the requests is eye-opening stuff, with users describing death threats, torture and wrongful imprisonment, but it's good to see offers of help from all over the world and it's heartening to read the success stories.



SoftwareVoucherCodes.co.uk is a discount-code website. The homepage features a search bar and a grid of promotional banners for various software brands like Ashampoo, Bitdefender, and Paragon. A 'NEW' badge is visible in the bottom right corner.

SOFTWARE

**SoftwareVoucher
Codes.co.uk**

softwarevouchercodes.co.uk

This discount-code site saves you money on software from big name companies including Ashampoo, Bitdefender and Paragon. You can view the latest and most popular deals; search for codes for a specific program or brand; and browse categories such as Utilities, Audio & Video and the mysterious Undertmerined [sic]. We were impressed by the quantity of offers, but the site's design leaves a lot to be desired and fails to provide the original prices of programs upfront. Still, the codes definitely work and the weekly email alerts you to new ones.

Our rating





Best New Websites

ENERGY

Hive Active Heating

www.hivehome.com

Hive is an innovative service from British Gas that lets you control your heating and hot water from your phone or tablet, and its relaunched site does a much better job of explaining how it works. You can buy the Hive kit online for £199; book the installation (which takes about 90 minutes and is included in the price); and learn about the benefits, such as saving up to £150 a year on your heating bills, without switching your current energy supplier. We like the breakdown of how the Hive app (for Android and iOS) works, and the site's clean, attractive design, with its big photos of snug, slightly smug customers. For more about controlling your home from your mobile device, see our Weekend Project on page 58.

Our rating

MOTORING

Absolute Reg

absolutereg.co.uk

Get the personalised number plate of your dreams at this site, which claims to offer more relevant options than any other registration dealer. You can search for a particular word, prefix or suffix to view the closest variations, with prices starting at £89, plus VAT and the DVLA Transfer fee. Helpfully, Absolute Reg does the paperwork for you, so all you need to do is fit the new plates. The site is very easy to use, with clear information and prices, a comprehensive FAQ and a tool that checks suitability for your vehicle. The closest plate we found to WEB USER was WE57 SER, which isn't too far off!

Our rating

ALSO NEW

WILDLIFE

Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels

scottishsquirrels.org.uk



This site hopes to stop the decline of Scotland's red squirrel population by asking people to report sightings of the endangered animal and its grey nemesis, which are then plotted on a map. You can watch videos of red squirrels feeding, and help the project by donating money and 'adopting' a squirrel. It's a well-designed site to delight animal lovers.

TECHNOLOGY

SIM Local

www.simlocal.com



Avoid roaming charges on holiday with the help of this site, which lets you buy a domestic SIM card for the country you're visiting. Specify where you're going, choose a network and order the SIM for delivery or to collect from the airport. The relaunched site is even simpler to use now, but currently only covers the UK, US and Ireland.

ARCHITECTURE

Garden Bridge

www.gardenbridge.london



Learn more about the "breathtaking new public garden" that will stretch across the Thames at this site for London's latest folly. You can view idealistic pictures; meet trustees including Joanna Lumley, who thought of the idea; and read answers to questions, though we're not convinced we really need the darn thing.

CYCLING

Spinlister

www.spinlister.com



At Spinlister, you can "rent a bike from someone like you", by browsing listings from across the world, which include photos, hire rates and cyclist reviews. You can then request a ride on your desired dates, or rent out your own bike. It's a great idea, but we're worried it could be exploited by thieves, and the bikes available for rent in the UK are almost exclusively in London.

WEBSITE SECRETS

Translate websites into Klingon

Klingon, the made-up language from *Star Trek*, has certainly made its mark on the web.

Google has its own Klingon interface at bit.ly/klingon368, where you can click 'I'm Feeling Lucky' instead of 'I'm Feeling Lucky', while other sites such as the Illinois Department of Social Security (www.ides.illinois.gov) offer Klingon as a language option. However, the best place to master the tongue of the rubber-foreheaded aliens is undoubtedly the Bing Translator (www.bing.com/translator). This translates big chunks of text and even entire web pages into Klingon. You never know when it might come in handy - *nID nob 'oH* (give it a try)! ■

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Build a Better Site

Specialist tips, top tools and practical help

Top Tips of the Fortnight

Get your site designed by a pro

A professional-looking bespoke website can be extremely expensive. Jimdo (www.jimdo.com) has teamed up with design competition site 99designs (99designs.co.uk) to provide a completely original, fully editable five-page site for £309. You choose from a set of options, then designers registered with 99designs pitch for the work by creating a logo and pages. You choose the one you like best and pay your selected designer the fixed fee. A year of Jimdo hosting is included in the price, then it reverts to the standard JimdoPro package (£60 per year) in subsequent years.

Welsh domains open to all

Welsh website owners should note that the '.wales' and '.cymru' domain names have become

available to anyone on a first-come, first-served basis. Although they have been available since September last year to those with a legitimate claim to a particular name (such as a registered business or trademark holder), anyone willing to pay can now register. The best price we've found is £9.59 from 1&1, though this is a discounted price for the first year only (bit.ly/wales368).



Deal of the Fortnight

iPage's (www.ipage.com) introductory offer on its unlimited storage and bandwidth hosting offers new customers the service for £1.80 per month for up to three years, instead of the usual price of £5.99.

Web-building Helpdesk

THIS ISSUE'S EXPERT:

Dr Andy Williams, SEO
Expert and author
(ezseonews.com)



I am building a new photography site using WordPress. What is the best SEO plug-in to use?

Jedi, via Web User Forums

A I don't recommend using a WordPress plug-in that promises to optimise your site for you. They are only as good as the coder behind them, and in many cases these are programmers and not SEO experts. The features in these plug-ins tend to be based on old keyword-focused concepts that can now get your site penalised in Google. On the other hand, there are SEO plug-ins designed to help optimise your site by giving you the tools to do so, where you retain total control. The best one in my opinion is WordPress SEO by Yoast (bit.ly/yoast368).



MINI WORKSHOP | Make sure your site is universally accessible

WAVE: wave.webaim.org | **5 mins** | Any browser

Many webmasters tend to focus on the things people can see on a website, rather than the things they can't. However, blind and visually impaired people often use non-visible elements, such as image descriptions, to help navigate web pages. Make sure your site is fully accessible to everyone, including those who can't see it



1 Go to the WAVE website at wave.webaim.org. Type the web address of the page you want to analyse into the box and press Enter or the arrow button. The page loads into the browser on the right, **1** next to a summary of problems, alerts and features in a panel on the left. **2**



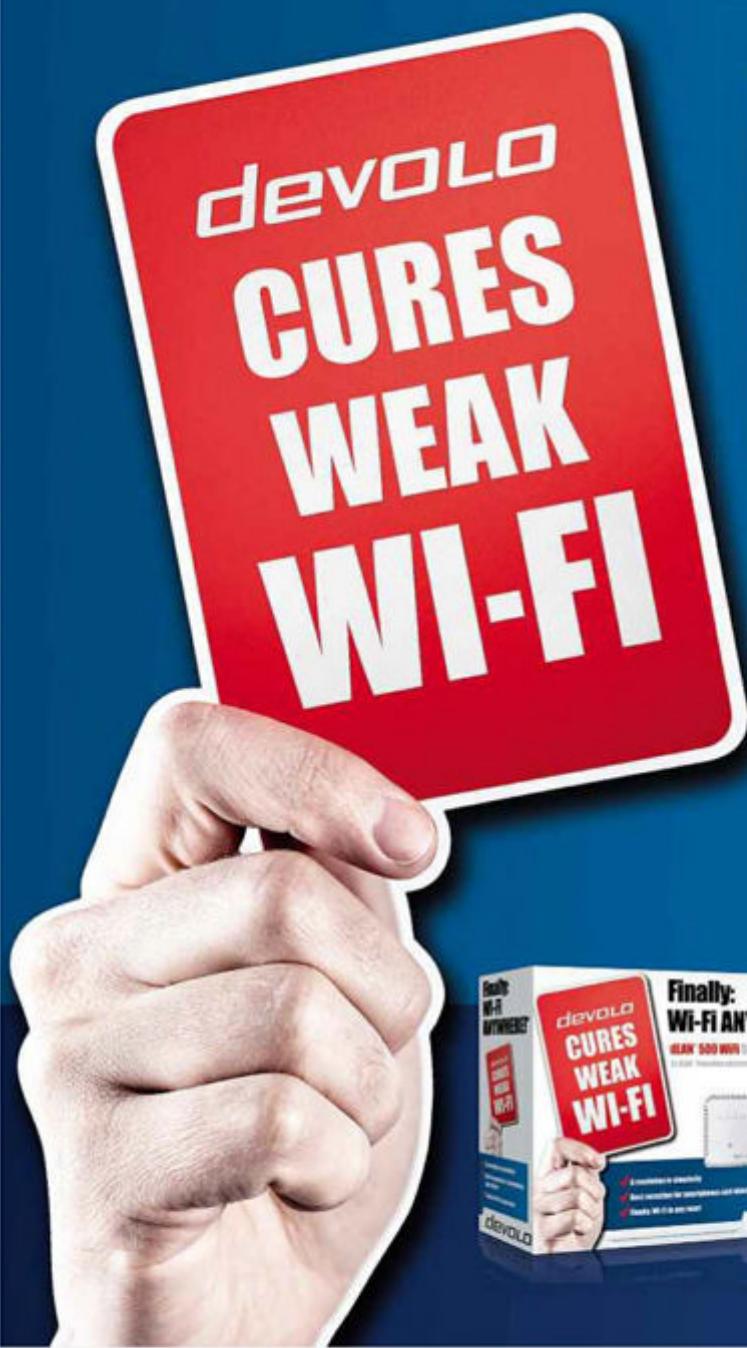
2 Click the flag icon **1** to see the details of your site's problems. Click an icon **2** to scroll the screen to the section it's referring to and it will highlight where the problem lies on your page. **3** Click a blue 'i' icon **4** to find out more about the different types of problems.



3 Press the <code> tab **1** to view your site's HTML code. Highlight a problem area by clicking its icon. **2** Red Errors should be fixed; yellow Alerts are warnings; and green Features are what you've got right. Click No Styles **3** to see your site with no CSS; and Contrast **4** to highlight colour problems.

WI-FI

Finally in any room*



- ✓ Better than any Wi-Fi repeater
- ✓ Enjoy Wi-Fi in any room*
- ✓ Best reception for smartphones and tablets



dLAN® 500 WiFi Starter Kit

- Unpack, plug in, get started
- Improves Wi-Fi reception and range
- Engineered in Germany
- 3-year manufacturer's warranty

* Required: broadband Internet connection, router and active power sockets within one property.



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Email: sales@devolo.co.uk

devolo

The Network Innovation



Product Test

We test and compare the latest products

WD MyCloud EX2100

Andy Shaw tests a network hard drive pre-configured with acres of space, that you can use with any device wherever you go



PC hard drives are getting bigger, and most have plenty of room to store your digital photos, video and music, but you can only access your collection from other devices if you leave your PC on; and while external hard drives are fine for backups, they can't be accessed from mobile devices. One solution is to stick everything on a NAS (network attached storage) drive and connect it to an Ethernet port on your router.

WD's EX2100 is near the top end of the company's NAS drives aimed at consumers, and its price reflects this. You can buy it without hard drives for £200 (bit.ly/zerotb368), or preinstalled with Western

Digital Red hard drives (see Product Info box, right, for capacities and prices). Since a 2TB WD Red costs around £85, this is good value.

Having the drives preinstalled makes set-up a doddle. We simply connected it to our router and plugged it into a wall socket, and it appeared on our network, ready for action. Like this, the NAS provides access to the pre-configured 'public' storage and the two drives are set up in a RAID 1 array, which mirrors everything on the two drives, so if one fails you don't lose a thing. Or you can switch it to RAID 0 to double your storage, but you lose the automatic backup.

There are three ways to access and control the

storage. On a PC, you can access the drive from the Network icon in Explorer, just as if it were an external hard drive. Or you can use WD's superb My Cloud app, which lets you access the NAS from a mobile device. This works both when you're on the network and when you're away from home, and also lets you download files to the device, for example if you want to play a video without streaming it.

The web-based interface, accessed via a browser, lets you change the NAS's settings. Its informative homepage displays at-a-glance information about the device and provides access to advanced tools and plug-ins. Not all the tools are installed by default, but you can perform a range of clever actions, from setting the device to download large files that you might not want clogging up your PC, through to running web-facing tools such as a WordPress website.

OUR VERDICT

If you just want a terabyte or two of storage that you can access from your network, WD has better value options, but they don't have the incredible breadth of tools and resources that the EX2100 can provide. Its sturdy enclosure is built to last



FEATURES



PERFORMANCE



EASE OF USE



VALUE FOR MONEY



and the replaceable hard drives mean it has plenty of room to match your growing storage needs.



Penclic Mouse

Does your wrist become uncomfortable when you use a mouse? **Andy Shaw** tests a new pointing device that's easier on your hand

Sitting at a computer for long periods of time is not the best thing for your health and posture, and your mouse is a common cause of repetitive strain injury (RSI). The unnatural angle at which you have to hold your wrist can cause discomfort and even pain, especially if you are operating a mouse for hours on end.

The Penclic is a new design of mouse that recognises that holding a pen is a more natural position for your hand than the extra rotation of your wrist required for controlling a mouse. The device consists of a pen-shaped stick on top of a small mouse, connected by a ball-and-socket joint, which allows it to move around freely. The pen section has two buttons and a mouse wheel, for clicking and scrolling.

Set up and versions

When we reviewed the Bluetooth version (Penclic Mouse B3), it seamlessly connected to our PC. The device is designed to work with laptops, which tend to have Bluetooth built-in, so it doesn't come with a Bluetooth dongle, though these are cheap to buy.

Setting up the Penclic to work in Windows 8.1 was extremely simple because our PC recognised it as a standard Bluetooth mouse, so its buttons and wheel worked straight away. If you don't want to use Bluetooth, there are also wired (Penclic Mouse D3) and standard wireless (Penclic Mouse R3) versions available.



“Clicking the buttons feels odd, because the action is more of a squeeze than a downward click **”**

Comfort and usability

Using the Penclic feels odd at first, because controlling a mouse in this way is unfamiliar. The change in the angle of your wrist makes moving the on-screen pointer around feel slightly off-kilter, although we got used to it very quickly.

Clicking the buttons also feels odd, because the action is more of a squeeze than a downward click. At first, we couldn't decide whether we preferred having the buttons under our index and middle fingers, as you would with a standard mouse, or under the thumb and index finger, which may feel more intuitive to

some people.

The latter option makes everything you do with the mouse feel a bit odd, and you'll probably want to switch the button functions around

PRODUCT INFO

Penclic Mouse

Price: from £49.99
(Buy from:
www.2tech.co.uk)

SPECIFICATIONS

- Wired, wireless or Bluetooth connection options
- 3 buttons and scroll wheel
- Can be used by left- and right-handed users
- Laser sensor
- Up to 1,600dpi accuracy
- 5m minimum wireless reach
- Mac and PC compatible
- Includes AAA 1.2V NiMH rechargeable battery with average life of one month
- 2 years warranty

FOR

- ✓ A vastly more comfortable mouse
- ✓ Works for left- and right-handed people

AGAINST

- ✗ Takes a bit of getting used to

so that the main left-click button is positioned under your index finger rather than your thumb. This is done via a simple option switch in Windows.

We ended up plumping for the two-fingered approach because it kept the scroll wheel within easy reach. It's good to have a choice of options, though, and because the joint between the pen and the mouse lets you rotate the pen through 270 degrees, you can have the buttons facing in almost any direction.

OUR VERDICT



It looks like a pen, but the Penclic B3 is really a mouse with a pen-like handgrip. It isn't designed to replace a stylus, but it makes using a mouse much more comfortable, because your wrist sits in a more natural position while you're using it. The device takes a bit of

FEATURES	
PERFORMANCE	
EASE OF USE	
VALUE FOR MONEY	

getting used to but, once we'd mastered it, we found it put much less strain on our wrist.



TP-Link RE200 WiFi Range Extender

Andy Shaw finds out if TP-Link's new dual-band range extender can help eliminate your Wi-Fi dead zones

If there are corners of your home where the Wi-Fi signal drops away or disappears completely, an extender is a cheap and simple way to solve the problem. We've reviewed Wi-Fi extenders from TP-Link before, but this latest model is a dual-band device that operates on both 2.4GHz (802.11b, g and n) and 5GHz (802.11n and ac) bands. The latter option only works if your router also provides a 5GHz network, but if it does, this extender can boost both networks simultaneously.

Pressing the extender's WPS button immediately found our 2.4GHz network, but failed to connect to the 5GHz network. However, by

connecting to the device directly (which you can do using its Ethernet port or by connecting to its default Wi-Fi networks), we were able to use a browser to configure the RE200. This method provides more control and lets you rename the extender's network if you want; it's less intuitive but helps to manage your connection.

Performance

We tested the device with two routers: an older model provided by our ISP and a second, newer model that we're already using as an access point to boost Wi-Fi coverage in our test house.

We used Speedtest.net to see what impact the Wi-Fi extender had on real internet speeds. At our main PC, connected via Ethernet to our fibre broadband gateway, we got a download speed of 35.66Mbps. As soon as we connected to Wi-Fi on either router, this immediately dropped. At its worst, this meant download speeds of 1.43Mbps in the room furthest away from the router. This is a classic Wi-Fi dead zone, and although we could still connect to the internet, the coverage was patchy at best.

Placing the TP-Link extender halfway between the router and our Wi-Fi device, then accessing the internet and retesting the network in the same location, brought the speed up to 12.9Mbps, which is a significant boost. The previously sluggish



“The weaker your Wi-Fi is, the better the results you'll get from the RE200”

internet speed improved to a standard you might expect from a basic wired broadband connection. Results around the house varied, but the worse the original connection was, the better the results from the extender.

Switching to the access point, which had a good signal originally, we found the extender didn't make a great deal of difference. There was a

small improvement over the 5GHz network, which we'd expect to have a shorter range than the 2.4GHz network. In the same room that we tested in previously, an already reasonable speed of 25.97Mbps was only boosted to 28.34Mbps. On the 2.4GHz network, it appeared that the extra step of transferring data through the extender actually slowed the network a little.

PRODUCT INFO

TP-Link RE200

uk.tp-link.com

Price: £34.99

(Buy from www.argos.co.uk)

SPECIFICATIONS

- 802.11b/g/n/ac Wi-Fi
- 2.4 and 5GHz bands
- 1x 10/100 Ethernet port
- 3 internal antennas
- WEP/WPA-PSK/WPA2-PSK security
- 110 x 75 x 66mm

FOR

- ✓ Cheap way to boost bad Wi-Fi
- ✓ Small, compact and attractive

AGAINST

- ✗ Won't provide much of a boost if your Wi-Fi is already reasonable

OUR VERDICT



The RE200 is designed to boost an ailing network, so the weaker your Wi-Fi is, the better the results you'll get from it. We found that it significantly boosted our Wi-Fi speeds when we set it up to combat a Wi-Fi dead zone, but it did little to boost a network already working at a reasonable

FEATURES	
PERFORMANCE	
EASE OF USE	
VALUE FOR MONEY	

speed. Its ability to connect using the fastest 5GHz standards is useful because this frequency tends to have a shorter range.

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Web User's Best Buys

Web User and its sister titles test over 2,500 products every year

HARDWARE

MULTIROOM SPEAKER

Sonos Play:1

£167 from www.currys.co.uk

Date tested: March 2015



The Sonos Play:1 offers impressive audio quality and comes with excellent software and great apps that provide seamless integration with music services. It's the ideal speaker to use as a starting point for a home entertainment system.

KEY SPECS

Two speakers ■ 802.11n Wi-Fi, 1 x 10/100 Ethernet ■ Android and iOS apps ■ Compatible with UPnP and SMB servers ■ AAC, FLAC, MP3, OGG and WAV ■ 161 x 12 x 12mm ■ 1.8kg

TABLET



Google Nexus 9

£319 from play.google.com

Date tested: February 2015

The Nexus 9 is our favourite Android tablet. It has a fantastic screen, even better than the iPad Air 2's, and superb battery life, lasting over 15 hours in our tests. It's cheaper than the latest iPad and comes in 16GB and 32GB capacities.

KEY SPECS

8.9in screen ■ 2,048 x 1,536 pixels resolution ■ Dual-core 2.3GHz 64-bit Nvidia Tegra K1 Denver processor ■ 16/32GB storage ■ 4G option costs £60 extra (32GB models only) ■ Android 5.0 ■ 228 x 154 x 8mm ■ 425g

WIRELESS ROUTER



D-Link DIR-868L

£65.97 from www.dabs.com

Date tested: December 2014

If you're willing to switch your wireless devices to the 5GHz network, the D-Link DIR-868L offers fast and reliable performance at a great price.

KEY SPECS

Dual-band 2.4GHz and 5GHz ■ 802.11b/g/n ■ 1,300Mbps theoretical maximum speed ■ Six internal antennas ■ 4 x 10/100/1000Mbps Ethernet ports ■ WPA and WPA2 encryption ■ 1 x USB 3 port ■ 217 x 123 x 102mm ■ One-year return-to-base warranty

SSD

Samsung 850 Pro 256GB



£136.03 from www.kikatek.com

Date tested: February 2015

The Samsung 850 Pro is crammed with new technology that makes it faster and more durable than its competitors. You could buy a similarly sized SSD for much less, but in our tests the cheaper models weren't as fast and they don't come with the 850 Pro's generous 10-year warranty.

KEY SPECS

256GB (also available in 128GB, 512GB & 1TB) ■ 53p per GB ■ SATA III interface ■ 2.5in drive case ■ 10 years warranty ■ 100 x 70 x 7mm ■ 66g

WINDOWS 8.1 LAPTOP



Asus Transformer Book Flip TP300LA

£449.95 from www.johnlewis.com

Date tested: January 2015

This touchscreen laptop folds over into a chunky tablet. It's well built, did well in our performance tests and has a fantastic battery life.

KEY SPECS

Dual-core 1.9GHz Intel Core i3-4030U processor ■ 4GB of memory ■ 13.3in touchscreen ■ 1,366 x 768 pixels resolution ■ 500GB hard drive ■ 802.11ac Wi-Fi ■ 326 x 232 x 22mm ■ 1.75kg ■ One-year collect-and-return warranty

DESKTOP PC



Chillblast Fusion Obelisk

£699.98 from www.chillblast.com

Date tested: November 2014

This great all-round desktop PC achieved a good overall performance in both our Windows and gaming tests. It runs quietly, has a good-quality monitor and is packed with great components, including a fast SSD and a generous hard drive.

KEY SPECS

Quad-core 4.2GHz Intel Core i5-4690K processor (overclocked) ■ 8GB of memory ■ 5 x USB3, 5 x USB2 ports ■ Gigabit Ethernet ■ 120GB SSD ■ 1TB hard drive ■ 1,920 x 1,080 pixels resolution ■ Windows 8.1 ■ 465 x 430 x 192mm

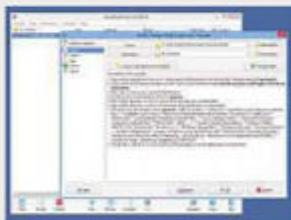
SOFTWARE & SERVICES

BACKUP AND SYNC

SyncBackFree

Free from bit.ly/syncback366
Date tested: March 2015

SyncBackFree is very capable software that gives you plenty of control over how it can be used. If you know what you need from your backups and you're prepared to spend some time configuring the options, SyncBackFree has everything you need.



KEY FEATURES

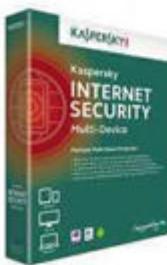
Synchronise: Copy files in both directions ■ Restore back-up files easily ■ Email logs ■ Schedule backups ■ Simple and Advanced mode ■ Runs on Windows 8, 7, Vista, and XP ■ Extensive Help documentation and support

INTERNET SECURITY

Kaspersky Internet Security 2015

£17.99 from bit.ly/kaspoffer
Date tested: January 2015

Kaspersky Internet Security performed near-perfectly throughout our tests last year, with only one unwanted program slipping through. Our sister title Computeractive is selling it at the reader-offer price of £17.99 (full price £39.99). Click the link above.



KEY FEATURES

Anti-virus and firewall tools ■ Protects online shopping and banking ■ Identity and privacy tools ■ Dangerous-website alerts ■ Advanced parental control ■ Licences for one, three, and five PCs; for one or two years, or pay monthly ■ Multi-Device version for Mac and Android protection

PHOTO EDITING

Adobe Photoshop Elements 13

£81.08 from www.adobe.com/uk
Date tested: December 2014



With its tidy interface and pop-out trays, Adobe Photoshop Elements provides everything an amateur photographer needs and helps you quickly find the right editing tools.

KEY FEATURES

Compatible with Windows XP, Vista, 7, 8+ (32- and 64-bit) ■ Bundled photo organiser ■ Content-aware edits ■ Guided edits ■ People-beautifier tools ■ RAW support

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VIDEO EDITING

Adobe Premiere Elements 13

£81.08 from www.adobe.com/uk
Date tested: December 2014



Premiere Elements 13's superb interface makes its many features neat but accessible. You won't find better video-editing software for the price.

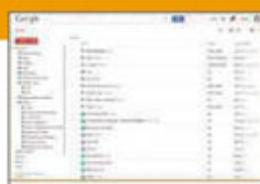
KEY FEATURES

Automatic editing ■ Export to multiple video formats ■ Burn to DVD and Blu-ray ■ Image stabiliser ■ Stop-motion capture

ONLINE STORAGE

Google Drive

From free from drive.google.com
Date tested: August 2014



Google Drive is easy to use and has lots of free storage. The Windows software integrates with Explorer, so saving and syncing files is like keeping them in any other PC folder.

KEY FEATURES

15GB free storage ■ Web-based office software ■ Works with Windows XP, Vista, 7 and 8+ ■ Chrome browser add-on ■ Android and iOS apps ■ 100GB extra storage for £1.19 per month; 1TB for £5.97 per month; 10TB for £59.51 per month.



Best Free Software

SYSTEM TOOL

Windows Repair 3

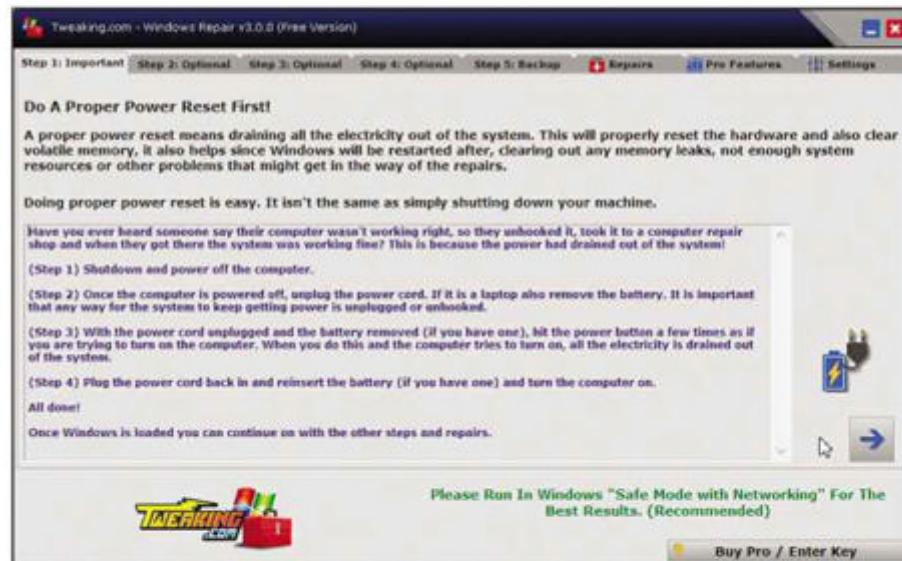
bit.ly/winrepair368

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+

File size: 12.2MB

Windows can go wrong in all sorts of ways – from annoying niggles to spectacular crashes. You might be able to fix some of these yourself, but others may require more specialist help.

As you can guess from the name, Windows Repair is a tool that is designed to help you overcome problems with Microsoft's operating system. It can fix many common frustrations including repairing file permission errors, replacing damaged system files and mending Registry flaws. It can also solve problems with Internet Explorer, Windows Update,



Windows Firewall and more.

The software has a simple, wizard-based interface that helps you prepare your system so it's ready for fixing. Optional suggestions include performing a proper power reset, checking the file system integrity and backing up the Registry and System Restore. The latest version also offers a new Pre Repairs Scan, which performs a quick sweep of Windows files, Registry settings, and other areas, looking for errors that might interfere with the repairs. It can also identify

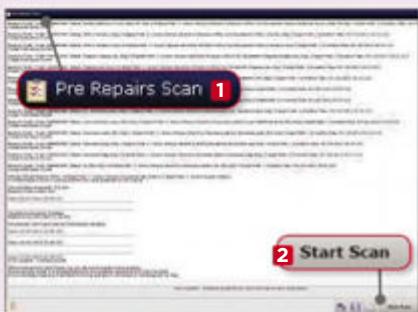
other potential problems.

You can jump from section to section in the wizard by clicking Next or using the tabbed interface. You can also go straight to the repairs. There's a comprehensive collection of tools (version 3 adds a lot more and also improves existing ones), and you can choose which ones to run from the list. Clicking on a repair will provide you with information on what it does.

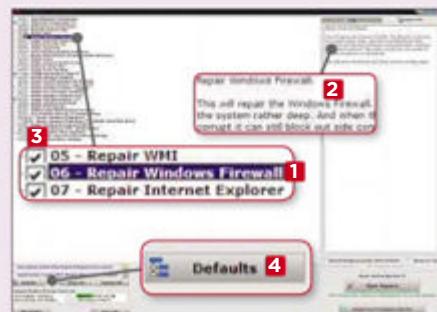
If you require additional features, a Pro version of Windows Repair is available for \$19.95 (£13.34).



MINI WORKSHOP | Fix PC problems with Windows Repair



1 Windows Repair's tabbed interface has various optional suggestions for things you might want to try before running the repairs. Step 2 lets you open the new Pre Repairs Scan. **1** Click the Start Scan button **2** and it will look for potential problems and present you with a list of its findings.



2 Click the Repairs tab, then click the Open Repairs button to display all the available fixes the software offers. Click an item on the left **1** to find out more about it. **2** Select the ones you want – you can also select all or none of them. **3** The Defaults button **4** will select the repairs suggested by the program.



3 Click the Start/Stop Repairs button **1** (you need to be logged in as an administrator) and it will go to work making all of the selected repairs. The process may take some time and you can keep an eye on the progress in the log window. **2** You can tell the program to restart or shutdown your PC when repairs are complete. **3**

This fortnight's top new software downloads to help you make the most of your PC, and they're all FREE



FILE SPLITTER

DataNumen File Splitter

www.datanumen.com/file-splitter

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+ **File size:** 437KB

Compressing files reduces their size, but sometimes not enough. If you have a large file you want to be able to share, use DataNumen's program to divide it into more manageable chunks, ready for emailing or sending in another way. You can choose the size of the pieces, depending on your needs. The program can join the pieces together again and turn several small files into a larger file. It can also compare two files byte-by-byte to make sure they are truly identical.



DESKTOP GADGET

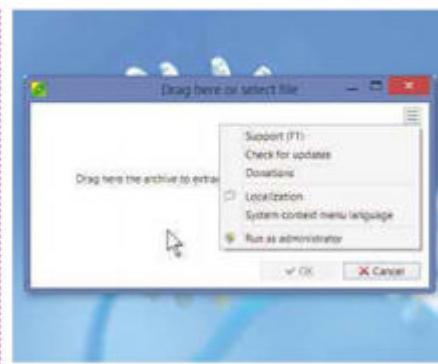
W8 Sidebar 7

bit.ly/w8sidebar368

Min requirements: Windows 7/8+

File size: 554KB

W8 Sidebar is a desktop gadget for Windows 7 and 8+. It contains system monitors (upload and download speeds, CPU, RAM and hard-drive usage), a task scheduler, searcher tool with autocomplete, system cleaner, auto-shutdown and even a Start menu. New in the latest version is a System Information panel that displays info about your hardware and software.



UNZIPPER

PeaExtractor

bit.ly/peaextract368

Min requirements: Windows XP/

Vista/7/8+ **File size:** 4.3MB

PeaExtractor is a simpler spin-off from the same publisher as the popular compression tool PeaZip, which only extracts files. It supports over 150+ file types including 7Z, CAB, GZ, ISO, RAR, TAR and ZIP. Just drag the file you want to open on to the window (you can also select or search for the item to open) and click OK. You can also open a file via the right-click menu.

New Windows 8 Apps

Dungeon Hunter 5

bit.ly/dungeon368

Min requirements: Windows 8+

File size: 1.13GB

The latest instalment in Gameloft's popular fantasy RPG series has you embarking on a single-player campaign through five realms and countless dungeons. There are also co-operative and multiplayer modes.



Tinkerplay

bit.ly/tinkerplay368

Min requirements: Windows 8+

File size: 69.1MB

Tinkerplay from Autodesk lets you design and 3D-print characters using the built-in part library. Simply drag parts together and they snap into place. You can apply textures to individual model parts.



Fedora Reader

bit.ly/fedoraread368

Min requirements: Windows 8+

File size: 1.45MB

This speedy RSS feed reader lets you choose from a large list of feeds, or add your own via URL. Fedora Reader runs in the background to keep your feeds up to date (although you can turn this feature off if you wish).





Best Free Software

MONITOR TOOL

SunsetScreen

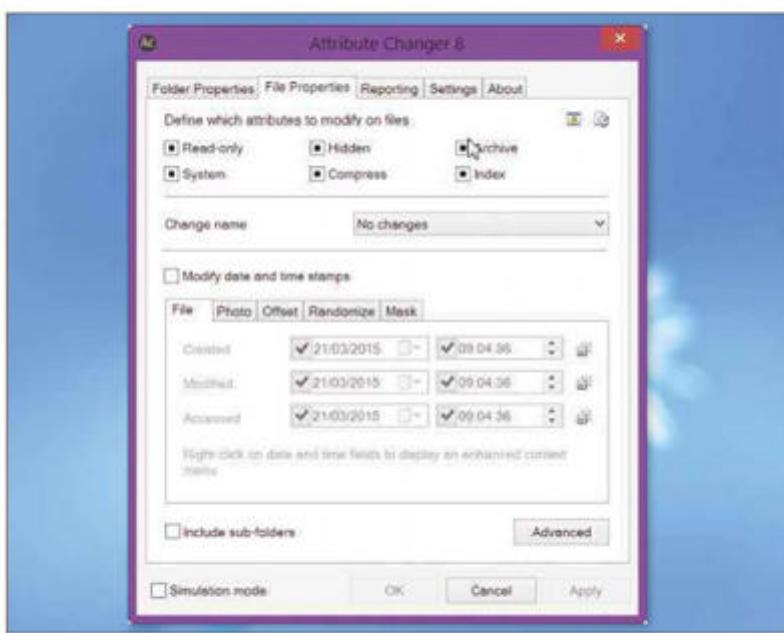
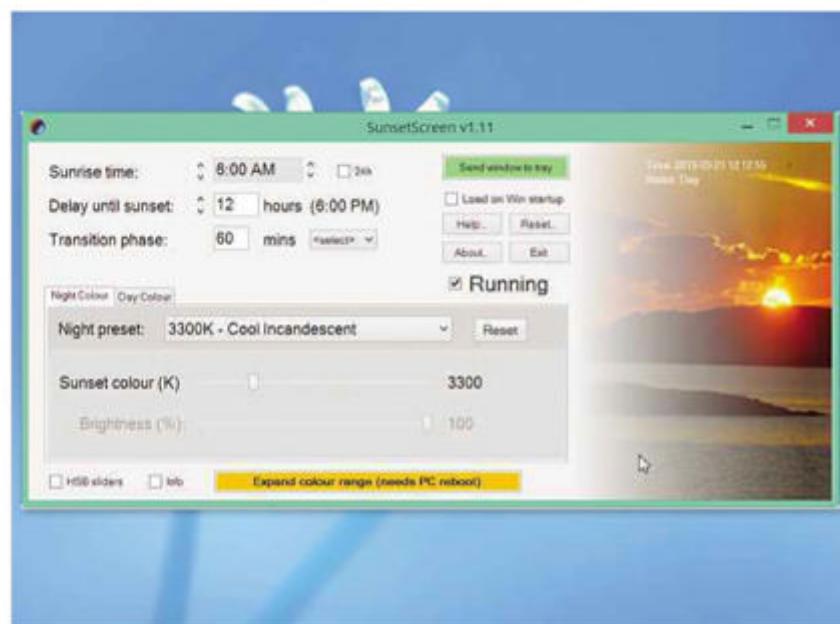
bit.ly/sunsetscreen368

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+

File size: 860KB

Much like the popular F.lux tool (justgetflux.com), SunsetScreen changes the colour of your monitor display in the evenings, reducing the harsh glare and limiting 'blue light' which has been proven to interfere with a good night's sleep. The program is customisable, so you can tweak all the settings to suit your personal needs, changing the night presets, sunset colour, brightness, timings and transition speeds. It's more tricky to use than F.lux, which handles most things automatically, but it's pretty obvious what the options do.

If you use your computer a lot in the evenings, especially just before you go to bed, SunsetScreen is definitely worth a look.



SYSTEM TOOL

Attribute Changer 8

www.petges.lu

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+

File size: 2.1MB

Attribute Changer is a powerful Windows Explorer extension that lets you make all sorts of changes to your files and folders, including your photos and even your drives. You can modify an item's attributes to make it Read-only, Hidden, compressed, indexed or archived, and change the date and time stamps. You can also change the case of a file or folder name. The program can be launched through the right-click context menu when you need to make a quick change to an item.

Version 8 of the software has been almost completely rewritten, and offers more features than previous versions. Attribute Changer will now let you reuse past settings, so you can instantly make the same changes to multiple files.

CUSTOMISATION TOOLBOX

Winaero Tweaker

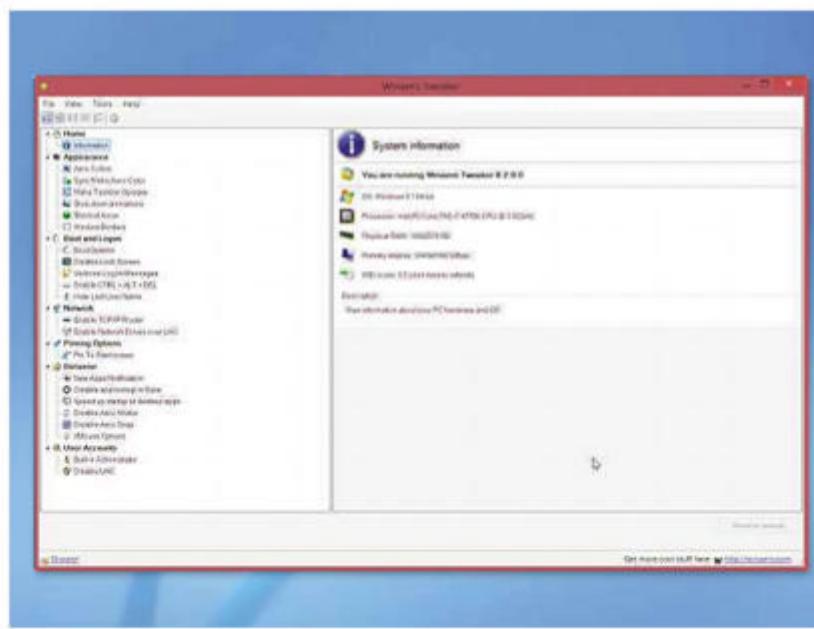
winaero.com

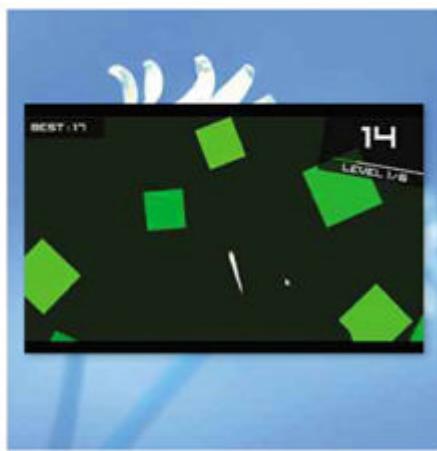
Min requirements: Windows 7/8+/10

File size: 1.2MB

The Winaero website is home to various tools designed to make changes to the Windows operating system. Winaero Tweaker offers most of these tools in a single interface, arranging them into categories such as Appearance, Network, Behaviour and User Accounts. The tools available will depend on the version of Windows you're running (Windows 7, 8+ or 10), but there are options for disabling taskbar transparency, customising (or removing) the shortcut arrow, forcing Windows to always show the boot menu, disabling the lock screen, and much more.

See our cover feature (page 38) for more ways to make Windows work the way you want it to.





GAME Cluster

bit.ly/cluster368

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+, Mac OS X or Linux
File size: 17MB

The aim of this game is to dodge and smash your way through a field of blocks. Use the left and right keys (or A and D) to move your triangle from side to side, and press both of them together for a boost which will let you blast through the squares. You need to avoid the spiky squares and outrun the wall that rises from below.

X Don't install...

XXCopy

www.xxcopy.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+
File size: 3MB

This free tool for copying files in Windows is described as a "very mature product", and it's certainly showing its age. For a start, it's a command-line program rather than one with a graphical user interface, which makes it rather confusing for people who aren't IT professionals. Once you've got the hang of its features, XXCopy is fast and efficient, but there are better options.



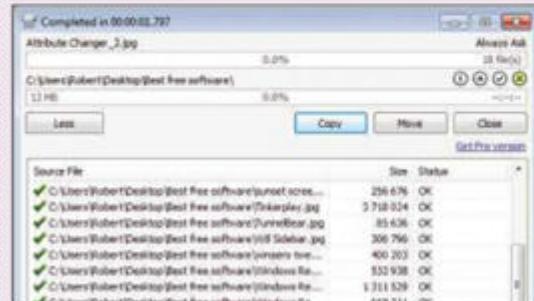
...Install this instead

TeraCopy

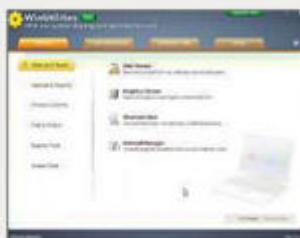
codesector.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+
File size: 2.6MB

Behind its deceptively simple interface, TeraCopy offers an impressively speedy and sophisticated means of copying and moving files on your PC, whether from one folder or drive to another, or across a network. You can use it as a replacement for Windows Explorer to reduce the amount of time it takes you to copy or move multiple files, especially large ones, and pause and resume the process with a single click. TeraCopy is free for personal use and there's also a Pro edition available for \$24.95 (£16.75) that adds further features, such as saving your favourite folders.



UPDATED | New tweaks and fixes for your favourite free programs



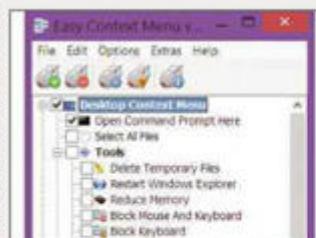
SYSTEM TOOL

WinUtilities Free 11.35

bit.ly/winutils368

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+
File size: 6.1MB

This tweaking suite repairs, optimises and protects your PC. As well as a number of performance improvements and bug fixes, there have been updates to the Process Security database and the software can now restart your PC after the 1-Click maintenance completes.



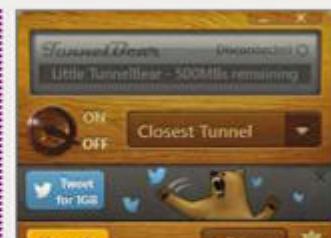
CONFIGURATION TOOL

Easy Context Menu 1.5

www.sordum.org

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+
File size: 1.6MB

If your right-click context menu is getting overcrowded, this program will help you manage it by removing unwanted items. The new version fixes a lot of bugs including both critical problems and general annoyances, and it is no longer confused by files or folders with a changed icon.



VPN

TunnelBear 2.3.9

www.tunnelbear.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+
File size: 11.3MB

The popular free VPN program gains several noteworthy fixes including interface improvements for larger screens, and lots of general enhancements. TunnelBear also now offers "Bear-grade" encryption (AES256) for all users, and amusingly promises "130% more bears as always."



PDF CONVERTER

Icecream PDF Converter 1.4

icecreamapps.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+
File size: 118MB

Icecream Apps' program lets you convert a range of file formats to and from PDF. This version has been optimised for working with big documents, a drag-and-drop bug has been fixed, and output image quality for PDF-to-Image conversion has been set.

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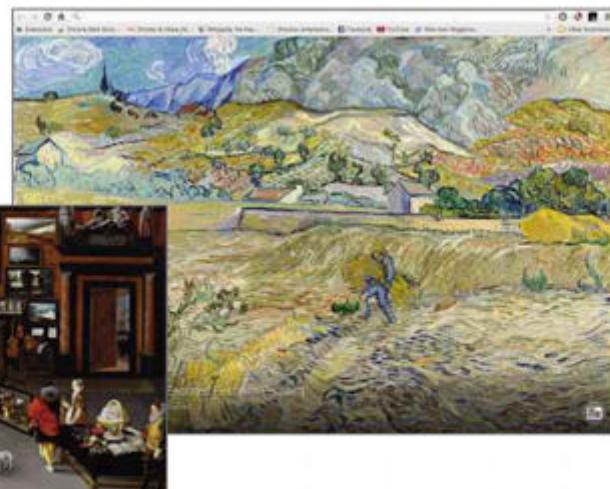
Best New Browser Tools



CHROME

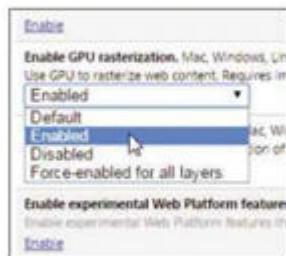
Enjoy classic works of art on your New Tab page

Back in Issue 357, we raved about the extension Earth View from Google Maps (bit.ly/earthview357), which displays aerial photos on your New Tab page. Google has now gone one better with its Google Art Project add-on (bit.ly/artproject368), which aims to "breathe a little culture into your day" by showing beautiful, classic paintings on the page. You can set the picture to change every day or each time you open a new tab, and expect to see masterpieces by Van Gogh, Monet and Degas. Click the name of the artwork to view the piece on the Google Art Project website, where you can zoom in, share the picture and explore other paintings in the same gallery or museum. To open your 'top sites', click the icon in the bottom-right corner.



Prevent big images from slowing Chrome

Many Chrome users have been experiencing problems with pages that include high-resolution images or



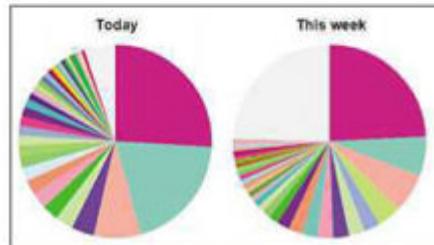
animated GIFs, both of which can be slow to load in the browser. Mail Online, for example, regularly publishes

long articles embellished with huge photos that can leave Chrome hanging. Fortunately, there's a quick fix that doesn't require an add-on or image filter. Either type `chrome:flags` into your address bar and scroll down to the entry 'Enable GPU rasterization'; or jump directly to `chrome://flags/#enable-gpu-rasterization`. Choose Enabled from the drop-down menu, click Relaunch Now and you should notice that images load more quickly.

See a pie chart of your browsing history

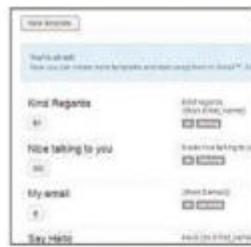
Discover which websites you visit most frequently by installing Chrome Visual History (bit.ly/visual368). This informative add-on presents data from your history as colour-coded pie charts

for Today, 'This week', 'This month' and 'All time'. Just hover your mouse over a segment to see which site it represents; or click the name of a site in the list on the right. Sites with only a handful of visits are grouped into the grey 'other' area. Unsurprisingly, our pie charts were dominated by Google, which grabbed around a quarter of the pie, followed by Twitter and, of course, the Web User Forums!



Write emails faster by using templates

If you get tired of repeatedly writing the same phrases in emails, you'll love Gorgias (bit.ly/gorgias368), which does the hard work for you. Instead of having to type words manually, you use keyboard shortcuts to activate templates. For example, press H+Tab to insert Hello at the start of a message, or KR+Tab to sign off with Kind regards. To save more templates to Gorgias, go into the add-on's Options, choose 'New template' and enter a



commonly used phrase along with a shortcut to activate it. Gorgias works with Gmail,

Outlook and LinkedIn, and it'll save you a lot of time and typing.

Remove distractions from YouTube

When you're watching a YouTube video, it's easy to get distracted by user comments, recommendations and what's next in your playlist. DF YouTube (bit.ly/dfyoutube368) - the DF stands for 'distraction free' - solves this problem by removing unwanted elements from YouTube pages so you can focus on the current video. You can restore all the elements by clicking the toolbar button and choosing Deactivate.



This fortnight's most useful tips and add-ons to help you get the most from Chrome, Firefox, Opera and more



FIREFOX

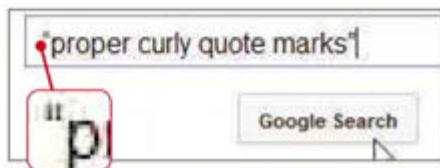
Analyse and visualise your browsing habits

Find out whether you spend more time shopping online than you do working using Mozilla's new add-on Firefox Interest Dashboard (bit.ly/dashboard368). This goes further than Chrome Visual History (see opposite page) to provide a breakdown of the types of site you like to visit, as well as their names, based on your browsing history. The data is provided as a colour-coded doughnut chart and a graph that tracks your habits over the last 30 days. Click a segment and the graph will adjust so you can see, for example, if you look at takeaway sites more on Thursdays than you do on Mondays. As well as categorising and ranking your interests, the add-on lists all the pages within each category. It's a fascinating tool for analysing your own behaviour.



Turn straight quote marks into curly ones

Whenever you use quote marks to enclose search terms in Google, YouTube or Amazon, they appear in straight, plain-text format ("") rather than the typographically correct curly versions (" "), known as 'smart quotes'. If you're a stickler for proper punctuation, you can use Instant Smart Quotes (bit.ly/quotes368) to automatically convert straight quote marks into curly ones. Sadly, the add-on doesn't work in webmail messages or social-media posts.



Share content on multiple social networks

Save yourself the effort of posting the same funny quote or photo to Facebook, Twitter and other social networks by installing Multi Social Share (bit.ly/multisocial368). As its name suggests, this add-on lets you share online content on multiple social sites simultaneously. Either select and right-click some text; or right-click an image or URL and choose 'Share with Multi Social Share'. Log into your social



accounts (you'll only need to do this the first time) and click Share to post the content to all selected sites.

Block and unblock images instantly

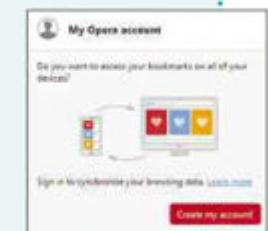
From speeding up loading times to hiding a photo that's NFSW (not safe for work), there are many reasons why you might want to block images on web pages. Picture Blocker (bit.ly/blocker368) lets you do this simply by clicking its toolbar button or by pressing a specific hotkey – by default this is Alt+I, but you can easily change it to one of your choice. Note that despite what it says in the add-on's description, you need to restart Picture Blocker for it to work.



OTHER BROWSERS

Sync Opera bookmarks across devices

Opera often leads the pack when it comes to browser innovations, so we're surprised it's taken until now for it to let you sync your bookmarks across devices – a feature that's long been available in Chrome and Firefox. Just log into your Opera account, in either the Desktop or mobile browser, and you can access all your bookmarks from anywhere. Pages you save to or remove from the list will be automatically synced across your PC, phone and tablet. To open the sync settings, click the button on the toolbar or choose Synchronise from the main Opera menu.



Make photos and videos fill your browser

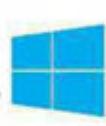
Why squint at details in tiny online windows, when you can make the content as large as possible using Fullscreen Anything (bit.ly/fullscreen368). This handy add-on (also available for Chrome) increases the size of photos, videos and games to fill your whole browser window. Just click the toolbar button or press Ctrl+Space to maximise what you're currently viewing without interrupting playback. If there's more than one object, you can select the one you want to enlarge.



Because Fullscreen Anything fills your browser rather than your screen (despite its name), you can still open new tabs and access other tools.



Best Free Apps



App of the Fortnight

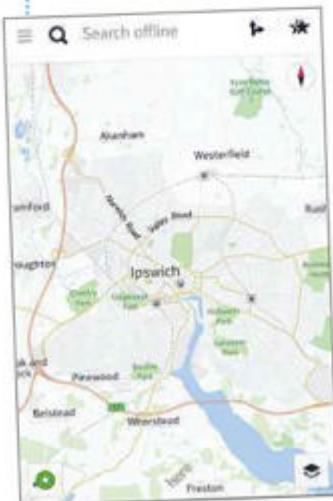
MAPS

Here Maps

bit.ly/heremaps368

Min requirements: iOS 7

Size: 60.4MB



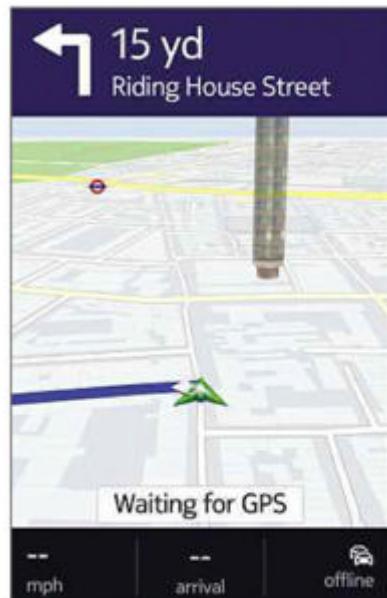
Removed from Apple's App Store just over a year ago, Nokia's Here Maps has been completely overhauled to provide iOS users with an experience that rivals Apple Maps and Google Maps. The app's standout new feature is an option that lets you save maps offline so you can check your location or navigate to an address without a mobile data connection. Unlike Google Maps, it lets you download maps for an entire country and although these files can be very large (the map of England is 537MB), they're extremely useful if you've got a small data allowance or want to avoid excessive roaming

UPDATED

charges abroad.

The app lets you choose between directions for driving, walking or public transport, and you can even search for nearby places of interest when your device is switched to Airplane Mode. Naturally, you'll need to be online to take advantage of Here Maps' live traffic information, but it's remarkable how much info the app gives you without an internet connection. The new Android version of Here Maps

has been available for a few months and was featured in our 'Browse web maps offline' feature in issue 364 (bit.ly/webuser364).



Our rating



TOOL

GWS Speed App

bit.ly/gwsspeed368

Min requirements: iOS 7

Size: 4.4MB

GWS Speed App provides a handy way to test your Wi-Fi or mobile network connection wherever you are. The app performs four different types of test, measuring ping, download speeds, upload speeds and web-page loading speeds, and you can choose to carry out any combination of these tests. Unlike other, similar apps, GWS Speed App isn't supported by annoying ad banners, and its simple, clear design makes it very straightforward to use. Whether you want to boast about your blistering fibre-optic speeds or complain to your ISP that your internet is too slow, this app serves a very practical function, letting you share your results via email and social media, and invite friends to test their own speeds.



Our rating



DRIVING

Theory Test by miDrive

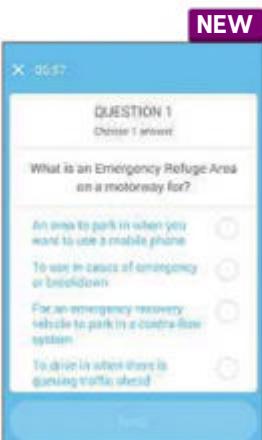
bit.ly/theory368

Min requirements:

Android 4.0, iOS 7

Size: Varies with device

This app makes it a lot more fun to revise for your driving test theory exam, by letting you challenge other learners to a head-to-head mock test. If your knowledge of the Highway Code is a little rusty, there's also a handy solo mode that quizzes you against the clock, offering full explanations to the all the questions you answer. It's the only app of its kind to offer free access to official DVSA revision questions, and usefully keeps a record of your success in both the head-to-head and solo modes, so you know when you're ready to book your real theory test!



Our rating



This fortnight's top free and paid-for apps

PRIVACY

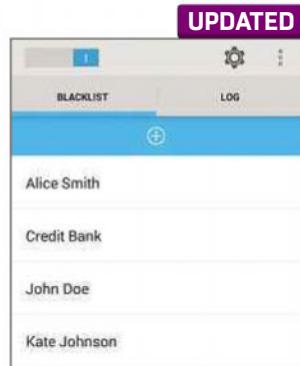
Calls Blacklist

bit.ly/blacklist368

Min requirements: Android (varies with device)

Size: Varies with device

This simple app lets you block unwanted calls on your Android device by creating a blacklist. There are handy options to block all private numbers or all numbers not in your Contacts, and you can also add individual numbers manually. Calls from blacklisted contacts are then blocked quietly without interrupting you, although each call is logged in case you need to see who has been trying to contact you. Blocking can be toggled on and off at the touch of a button and Calls Blacklist can also be used to block text messages. However, you'll need to set it as your default SMS app on Android versions 4.4 onwards if you want to take advantage of this functionality.



Our rating



CAREERS

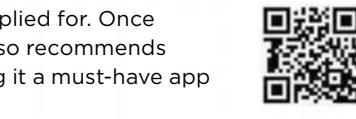
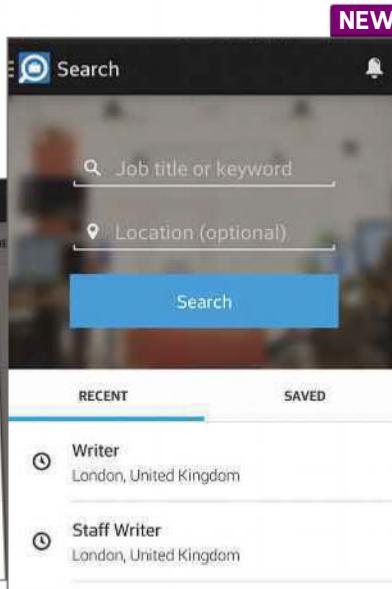
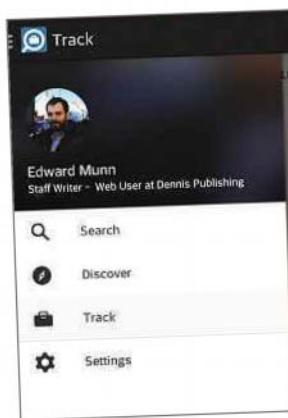
LinkedIn Job Search

bit.ly/linkedin368

Min requirements: Android 4.1

Size: 14MB

LinkedIn's Job Search app was released on iOS last year and it's now available on Android, too. With this handy tool you can search, sort and filter jobs, and apply for them with only a few taps using your LinkedIn profile as a CV. Since everything is connected to the social network, you can easily read more about the person who posted the job and see if you know anybody who works at the company; there's no need to worry about privacy, either, because none of your activity appears on the site. We particularly liked the app's Track section, which provides instant access to jobs you've already viewed, saved or applied for. Once you've viewed a few roles, LinkedIn Job Search also recommends similar positions as they become available, making it a must-have app if you're looking for your dream job.



Our rating



Like SyncBackFree Love SyncBackPro

Windows Backup Software

- Cloud Support: Google Drive, Dropbox etc.
- Backup Windows, Apple OS X & Android
- Media Transfer Protocol - Pictures/Music/Movies
- Copy Locked or Open Files
- Versioning - Keep Previous Backups
- Scripting Support

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www.2BrightSparks.com

ROUND UP | Quick bites

Voltz

bit.ly/voltz368

Min requirements: Android 2.3.3

Size: 3.9MB

Designed to help you save money on your energy bills by advising you when to switch supplier, Voltz was only available on iOS when it won 'App of the Fortnight' in issue 363 (bit.ly/issue363) of Web User. The app, which is the first of its kind in the UK, has now also been released on Android, providing you with impartial information about every tariff available from the UK's energy suppliers.





Best Free Apps

APPS

App of the Day

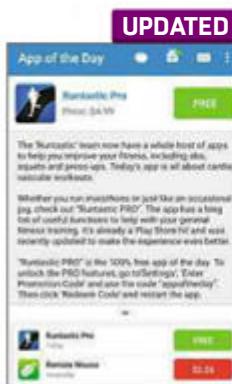
bit.ly/appoftheday368

Min requirements: Android 2.3.3

Size: 13MB

App of the Day brings you a new, free Android app every day. All the apps are "100% free", meaning they contain no advertising and have all premium features unlocked. Apps offered previously have covered a range of functions and interests including music, sport, battery optimisation and photo editing, and App of the Day aims to work only with the best developers. For example, it has an exclusive partnership with sports app developer Runtastic, meaning users are offered a Pro version of a Runtastic app every month. The paid-for apps are only available for free 24 hours but, once downloaded, their premium features are unlocked permanently.

Our rating



GAME

Perfect Shift

bit.ly/perfectshift368

Min requirements: Android 2.3.3, iOS
Size: 245MB

New to Android and iOS, Perfect Shift was a big hit when it was first released on Windows Phone. As its name suggests, it's a drag-racing game in which the object is to change gear at exactly the right time to maximise acceleration and beat your opponent across the finishing line. The app is very simple to use and revolves around a story mode, in which you take part in a variety of races against increasingly challenging opponents. With each race you win, you receive rewards that you can use to customise and upgrade your car. We found it hard to put down, but would have liked it even more if there was an option to challenge your friends to a race!

Our rating



5

NEW APPS WORTH PAYING FOR

DRIVING

Tom Tom GPS Navigation Traffic

bit.ly/tomtom368

Min requirements: Android 4.0.3

Size: 90MB **Price:** Free

(with in-app purchases)

Tom Tom's new navigation app offers live traffic updates, speed-camera notifications and the option to store maps offline. It's free to use for up to 50 miles a month; otherwise you'll need to pay a £15 annual subscription.



WORD PROCESSING

Ulysses

bit.ly/ulysses368

Min requirements: iOS 8

Size: 23.4MB **Price:**

£14.99

Ulysses is a powerful tool for writers that brings desktop-quality word processing to the iPad. At £14.99, it's not cheap, but once you've paid for it, there are no further hidden costs.



New to Windows Phone, this multi-platform password manager is designed to protect your website logins and bank account details in the event that your smartphone is lost stolen.

VIDEO

myTube

bit.ly/mytube368

Min requirements:

Windows Phone 8

Size: 2MB **Price:** £0.79

This app lets you keep YouTube videos playing on your Windows Phone while you read comments and browse other channels and videos. You can still hear the videos' sound, even while using other apps.



PRODUCTIVITY

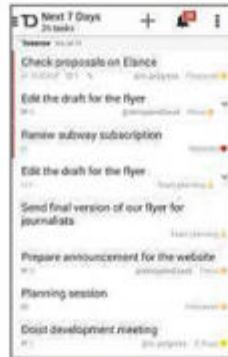
Todoist

todoist.com/premium

Min requirements: Android (varies with device), iOS 8

Size: Varies with device **Price:** Free (with in-app purchases)

This brilliant to-do list app is free to download and use, but to unlock its premium features, which include setting up push notifications, you'll need to subscribe for £18 a year.



PASSWORD MANAGER

mSecure

bit.ly/msecure368

Min requirements: Windows Phone 8

Size: 2MB **Price:** £3.49

Tom Tom GPS Navigation Traffic



Ulysses



mSecure



myTube



Todoist





Best New TV Apps

SPORT

Sky Sports for Android

bit.ly/skysports368

Min requirements: Android 4.0

Size: 18MB

If you're a Virgin Media customer with a Sky Sports subscription and an Android phone, you previously had to wait until you got home to watch matches, races and other sporting events. Thankfully, this update to the Android app, which brings it in line with the iOS version, means you can now stream Sky Sports 1 to 5, Sky Sports F1 and Sky Sports News HQ live to your Android device, wherever you have a 3G, 4G or Wi-Fi connection in the UK. You can also access Sky Sports' coverage of breaking news for football, cricket, rugby and more. Just tap the Virgin Media logo on the sign-in page and enter your details.



GAMES

Motion Tennis Cast

bit.ly/tennis368

Min requirements: Chromecast with Android 4.2

Size: 24MB



It was only a matter of time before motion-controlled gaming, originally made popular by the Nintendo Wii, came to the Chromecast. Motion Tennis Cast turns your phone into a tennis racquet that you use to control the match on your TV. Swing your device to serve and return the ball, and slice, lob and smash your way to glory. You can choose from four difficulty levels and play on grass, clay or synthetic courts; challenge players from around the world in Time Attack Mode; and even count the calories you burn during each match. Of course, the big risk is your phone flying out of your hand and breaking a window or hitting someone in the face, so be sure to play carefully and give yourself plenty of room!

TV & FILM

Upflix - Netflix Updates

bit.ly/upflix368

Min requirements: Android 2.3.3, iOS 7

Size: 11MB

Netflix is brilliant, but it does a pretty poor job of telling you about TV shows and films it's just added, which is where Upflix comes in handy. This unofficial app lists all the new series and movies that appear on the service each day, to save you having to browse the Netflix app trying to find something you haven't seen before. Upflix doesn't stream anything, but lets you add items to your Netflix queue, and watch trailers and featurettes. You can browse the app by genre, title, actor or director, and get notifications when new content is added.



X Don't install...

Swipe-In Settings

bit.ly/swipein368

Large phone screens can be difficult to operate with one hand, which is



why Swipe-In Settings is a good but ultimately limited idea. It lets you control settings such as the volume, brightness and Wi-Fi on your phone with a quick swipe of your finger or thumb, rather than needing to go through several menus. However, in this ad-supported free version, you can only control five different options, and configuring them is unnecessarily complicated.

...Install this instead

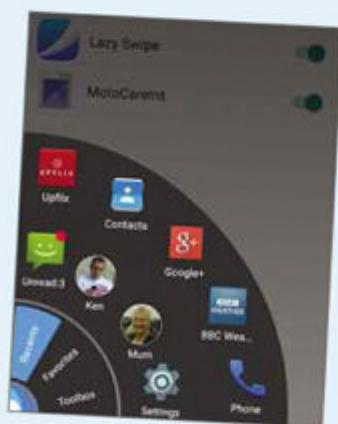
Lazy Swipe

bit.ly/lazy368

Min requirements: Android 4.0

Size: 829KB

Lazy Swipe shows how one-handed phone operation can be done properly, and it will change the way you use your device. It automatically detects your most recently and frequently used apps, and lets you access them by swiping from one of the bottom corners of your screen. This means you can locate and launch apps with the same finger or thumb, and leave your other hand free. Lazy Swipe's shortcuts are divided into Recents, Favorites and Toolbox, with the latter including options for brightness, volume and data. You can also see notifications from social and messaging services. It's very easy to master, with a smart, speedy interface, and could prove helpful to anyone who has problems using one of their hands.





Instant Expert

Our guide to Catfishing

Not everyone online is being honest about their identity, and there could even be someone pretending to be you. **David Crookes** explains the creepy new trend of catfishing



What is it?

Catfishing is an online activity that involves a person pretending to be someone else, typically with the aim of enticing others into a romantic relationship. 'Catfishes' (this is apparently the correct plural, rather than 'catfish') will use someone else's photos to create a digital identity and post false information to produce a convincing social circle. They often maintain their deception for months and even years.

How does it work?

A catfish will set up a social media account under a made-up name, then attempt to lure people into befriending them and falling for them romantically. Rather than use photos of themselves, a catfish will copy them from social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. They then continue to update their accounts with more copied photos.

So there are two victims?

Yes, the person whose photos are stolen and the people who are tricked by a catfish and are unaware that they've been duped. Catfishes go to great lengths to fabricate a fictional life that appears plausible.

The documentary Catfish was about fake online identities

Why is it called catfishing?

The name derives from a documentary film released in 2010 called *Catfish*. Directed by Henry Joost and Ariel Schulman, it followed a 24-year-old New York photographer called Yaniv "Nev" Schulman who falls in love with a flirtatious 19-year-old woman called Megan on Facebook. He never meets her but later discovers that the subject of his devotion is a 39-year-old called Angela Wesselman, who had invented a fictional social group on Facebook consisting of 'Megan' and her 17 equally non-existent online friends. Her husband told the documentary makers that Angela was a catfish because her actions had been similar to fishermen "putting catfish in with the cod to nip at their tails and keep them active". The documentary proved

so popular that it inspired a reality television series on the entertainment channel MTV called *Catfish: The TV Show*.

Why do people catfish?

Each impostor has their own reasons. Some have mental-health problems, others are motivated by boredom or are seeking revenge on someone and end up dragging innocent people into the fray. The more spiteful catfishes enjoy the humiliation it causes their victims, but many simply lack self-confidence and hide their personalities behind someone else's photo, believing that what they are doing is harmless.

Catfishing is now regarded as an online dating scam, and has also been used to con money from people.

Who is at risk?

Everyone. Men are statistically more liable to fall in love with one of these fictional characters because most catfishes have been women – or, as has happened, men posing as women. There have even been reports of straight women catfishing gay men on the all-male location-based social network Grindr.

On the other hand, women are more likely to have their social accounts mined for photos. Catfishes tend to assume the visual identity of conventionally attractive





people and typically choose images that showcase an idyllic, enticing lifestyle.

How many people are caught out?

It's hard to put a number on catfishing victims because many are too embarrassed to come forward. Dating app Tinder is a catfish favourite since it doesn't require much profile information and it pulls data from Facebook, leading to discussions such as "Tinder has turned me into a catfish" (bit.ly/tinder368). Dating websites such as eHarmony warn their users about catfishing and a rising number of private investigators are being hired to catch people out.

What are the consequences of catfishing?

There are certainly some horror stories. In February, Ruth Palmer, a 25-year-old from Brighton, told her local newspaper, *The Argus* (bit.ly/theargus368), that her photos had been used to create several social-media profiles under the name Leah Palmer. The impersonator had struck up several online relationships over three years, including one person who spoke to 'Leah' every night, and was closely following Ruth's life, including the news that she had moved to Dubai – so 'Leah' did, too. Victims were encouraged to share sexually explicit images.



Ruth Palmer's online identity was hijacked by a catfish scammer

Are there any tell-tale signs?

Although scammers avoid using stock photos and choose real-life social-media images to make themselves appear convincing, the model-standard good looks of the people in stolen photos may act as a warning. If the person then goes on to conjure attributes of a perfect life (a well-paid job, tireless fundraising, amazing holidays), they may seem too good to be true. Of course, good-looking people with enviable lives do exist, so watch out for other signs such as a reluctance to meet or chat over Skype. You may spot that, despite being the most perfect person alive, they have

suspiciously few friends on social media and a relatively new profile.

How do you confirm your suspicions?

You could simply type a person's name into a search engine if you have a gut feeling that something isn't right. Most people leave some sort of online trail so if nothing turns up, it could be suspicious. You can find out where else an image appears online using reverse image-search tools such as Google Inside Search (bit.ly/googleimage368) and TinEye (www.tineye.com). A good tactic is to show a keen interest in the person you're in contact with, asking them lots of questions and then verifying their answers online.



Google Inside Search is a useful tool in checking a profile photo's authenticity

Are the authorities taking action?

If people have evidence of a fake profile, social networks will take them down because it goes against their policies. Twitter (bit.ly/twitterpolicy368), for

example, says: "Impersonation is a violation of the Twitter Rules. Twitter accounts portraying another person in a confusing or deceptive manner may be permanently suspended under the Twitter impersonation policy." Unfortunately, the police can't get involved because, although the impostors are copying photos and linking them to a made-up name, no crime is being committed. There could be a civil case for image copyright, but it would entail tracking down the catfishes, which also proves difficult.

Can I prevent people stealing my details?

To some extent. You can set your privacy settings to the highest possible level on social media so only friends can access your photos. Avoid making too much personal information public and encourage your friends to do the same, because some catfish are very clever and infiltrate both their victims' and their victims' friends' accounts for images.



Strict privacy settings on social media sites can help to protect you from catfishes

CATFISHING IN THE NEWS

The basketball player

A Canadian woman spent close to three years targeting 11 victims, among them US basketball player Chris Andersen (bit.ly/chris368). She impersonated Andersen, a woman in California and that woman's mother, communicating to all three in a bizarre and complicated catfish triangle that even resulted in the player's home being searched by police.

The drug bust

When police officers from the American Drug Enforcement Agency arrested Sondra Arquett on drug charges, they took photos from her phone without permission and set up a fake Facebook profile in a bid to flush out suspected drug dealers (bit.ly/sondra368). The agency paid her \$134,000 after she complained that her privacy had been violated.

The journalist

On Vice.com (bit.ly/vice368), a freelance writer called Ellie Flynn told of being frequently approached by people convinced they were friends, after someone used her photos online for eight years. The catfish refused to remove the profiles when challenged. "In fairness," wrote Ellie, "the lie is so vast and all-encompassing that I too would believe the profiles were real."

Someone's Been Using My Facebook Photos to 'Catfish' People for Nearly a Decade

January 21, 2015

By Ellie Flynn



Hack Windows TO Beat Microsoft's Restrictions

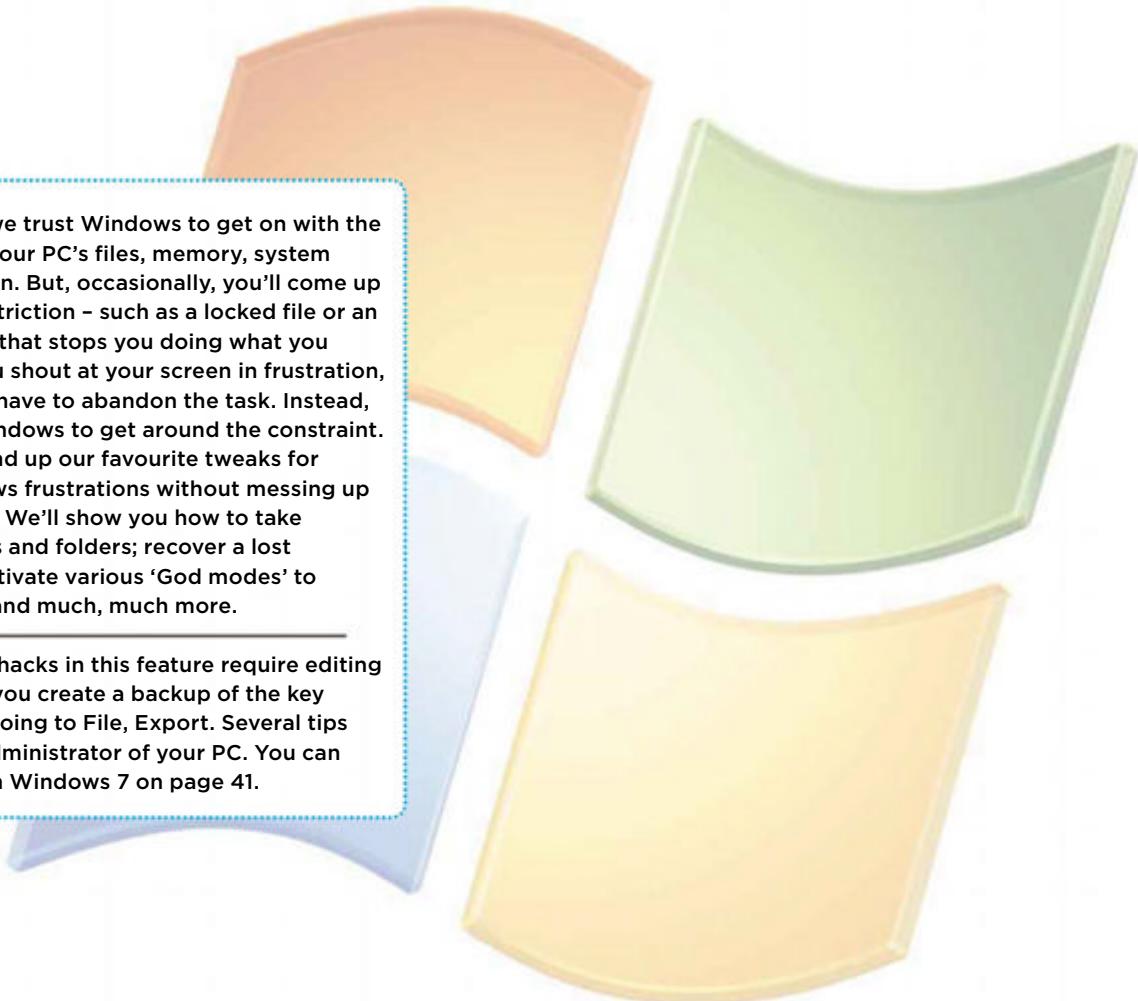
COVER
FEATURE

Don't let Windows tell you what you can and can't do. **Wayne Williams** reveals how to bypass Microsoft's constraints so you can make your PC run how you want

Most of the time, we trust Windows to get on with the job of managing our PC's files, memory, system settings and so on. But, occasionally, you'll come up against a problem or restriction - such as a locked file or an incompatible program - that stops you doing what you want. This may make you shout at your screen in frustration, but it doesn't mean you have to abandon the task. Instead, you can try 'hacking' Windows to get around the constraint.

In this feature, we round up our favourite tweaks for solving common Windows frustrations without messing up your computer's system. We'll show you how to take ownership of locked files and folders; recover a lost Windows licence key; activate various 'God modes' to access hidden settings; and much, much more.

WARNING: Some of the hacks in this feature require editing the Registry. Make sure you create a backup of the key you're going to edit by going to File, Export. Several tips also require you to be administrator of your PC. You can find out how to do this in Windows 7 on page 41.



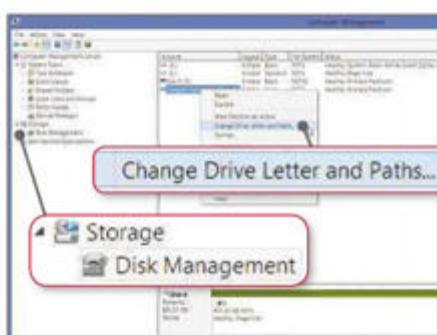


Hack your files & folders

Give your drives a different letter

Windows automatically assigns a letter to each drive on your PC, whether it's a fixed one, such as a hard drive, or a temporary one, such as a USB memory stick. However, its choice of letters can sometimes make no sense: for example, if you have a lot of drives, they might be labelled C, E, G, I and Y.

You can change the drive letters to something more logical by using the built-in Computer Management tool. Click the Start button and open the Control Panel. Click 'System and Security', then Administrative Tools, and double-click Computer Management (in Windows 8+, you just need to search for 'Computer Management'). Select Disk Management in the left-hand pane to bring up a list of drives on the right. Right-click a drive and select 'Change drive letter and paths'. Click the Change button, pick a drive letter from the unassigned list, and click OK.



Add new locations to the Send To menu

You can send files on your PC to locations you regularly access, such as a USB flash drive, by right-clicking them and opening the Send To menu. If the right-click menu doesn't list the folder you need, just go to the folder you want to add, right-click it and go to Send To, 'Desktop (create shortcut)'. A new shortcut to that folder will appear on your Desktop.

Now open Windows Explorer, type shell:sendto in the location bar at the top and hit Enter. The available Send To options will be displayed. Drag and drop the new shortcut to this folder. You can also remove unwanted locations to



make your Send To menu more tidy.

Always open files in your chosen program

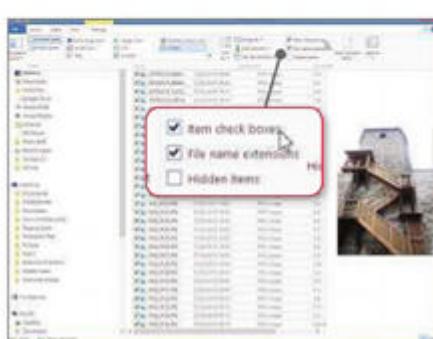
Some programs take ownership of certain file formats; for example, a photo editor might set itself to open every type

of image file. If you'd rather designate a different program to open certain file types, you can set the default options yourself using the Default Programs feature. In Windows 7, click the Start button and select 'Default Programs'. In Windows 8+, you can simply search for 'Default Programs' and launch it. You can then choose the program you want as your default choice for opening a particular file type.

Add tick boxes to select multiple items

The quickest way to pick more than one file in Windows is to hold down Shift or Ctrl while you click the files you want. However, you can also add tick boxes next to your files and select them by ticking these boxes.

In Windows 7, click Start and type 'Folder options' into the search box. Open the View tab and tick 'Use check boxes to select items'. In Windows 8, open File Explorer, click the 'View' tab, and tick 'Item check boxes'.



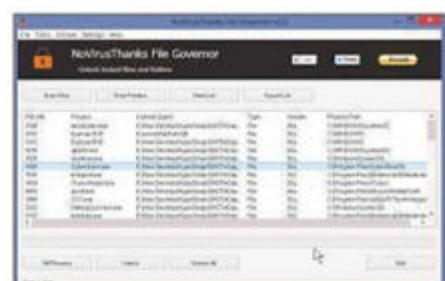
Take ownership of locked files and folders

Windows prevents you from deleting or modifying files or folders that are being

Choose the programs that Windows uses by default

- Set your default programs: Make a program the default for all file types and protocols it can open.
- Associate a file type or protocol with a program: Make a file type or protocol (such as .mp3 or http://) always open in a specific program.
- Change AutoPlay settings: Play CDs or other media automatically.
- Set program access and computer defaults: Control access to certain programs and set defaults for this computer.

used by a program or by the system itself. However, it can sometimes tell you that an item is in use by another person or process when it clearly isn't. The easiest way to unlock a file is to reboot your PC, but you can also use a program such as NoVirusThanks File Governor (bit.ly/filegov368) to free the locked item without having to restart. It lets you unlock files with a single click, scan folders for locked items and quickly terminate restrictive processes. You should only unlock/delete a file if you are sure it's safe to do so.



Help Windows open unknown file formats

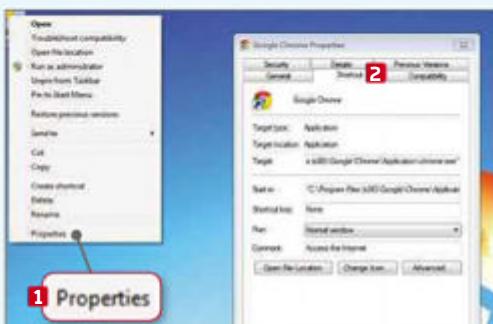
If Windows doesn't know how to open a particular file, you can use Open With from the right-click menu to select a program yourself. OpenWith Enhanced (bit.ly/openwith368) is a more sophisticated version of this built-in tool that can suggest an appropriate program. Right-click the file you want to open and select Open With, then Choose Default Program. OpenWith Enhanced will display a selection of possible choices, so you can set your preferred program as the default.





MINI WORKSHOP

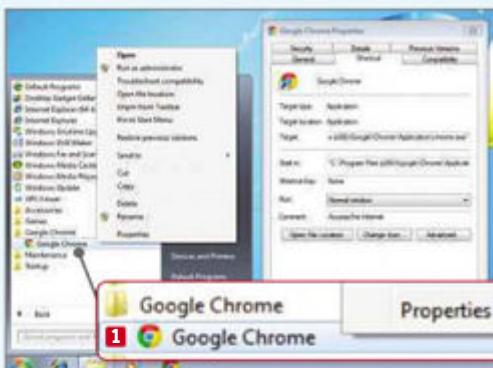
Create keyboard shortcuts for your favourite programs



1 Windows lets you assign hotkeys to your favourite programs (as well as folders and web pages), so you can launch them directly from the keyboard. If you have a shortcut to the program on your Desktop, right click this and select Properties. **1** A window will open showing the Shortcut tab. **2**



2 Click inside the Shortcut Key box **1** and press any letter or combination of letters on the keyboard. It should be something easy to remember - 'C' for Chrome, for example. Additional keys, such as Ctrl and Alt will be added automatically to avoid potential conflicts with existing shortcuts.



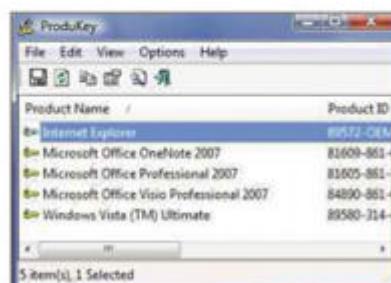
3 Click Apply, then OK. In future, pressing this keyboard combination will start the program. You can also assign hotkeys to programs pinned to the taskbar or the Start menu. Just right-click the shortcut for the program you want to assign a hotkey to **1** and repeat the process described above.



Change your system settings

Recover a lost Windows licence key

If you want to reinstall Windows from scratch, you'll need to enter your original licence key during the installation process. If you can't remember what you've done with it, don't worry, it's easy to track this down. Just run ProdKey from Nirsoft (www.nirsoft.net) - it's a tiny program that lists the CD key for Windows, along with any keys for Microsoft Office, if you have the suite installed. Note that due to the hacking nature of the program, your anti-virus software may flag it as a threat, but it's perfectly safe to use.



Stop Windows restarting after an update

If your PC is set to automatically download and install updates, there's a good chance Windows will restart your system as soon as the process is complete. To stop this happening, open the Control Panel, click 'System and Security', then click Windows Update. On the left, click 'Change settings', then change the updates option to either 'Download updates but let me choose whether to install them', or 'Check for updates but let me choose whether to download and install them'.



Log into Windows 8+ automatically

Windows 8+ is designed with security in mind, so it forces you to enter a password and log into your Microsoft account before you can start using it. If you don't share your computer with other people, and

are confident that no one has access to your PC, you can configure the operating system to bypass this stage.

From the Start screen, press Windows+X, click Run and type netplwiz. Click OK and highlight your account. Untick 'Users must enter a username and password to use this computer'. Click Apply. Enter your password and confirm it, then click OK. Restart your PC and, when Windows loads, it will automatically log you in.

To go straight to the Desktop, type Navigation on the Start or Apps screen, open Navigation Properties, and tick 'When I sign in or close all applications on a screen, go to the desktop instead of Start'.



Change when scheduled maintenance runs

In Windows 8+, common maintenance tasks such as software updates, security scanning and system diagnostics run daily, usually in the early hours of the morning. If you want to change this to a different time, open the Control Panel and select 'System and Security', Action Centre, Maintenance. Under Automatic Maintenance, click 'Change maintenance settings' and use the drop-down menu to select a new time. Scheduled maintenance can wake your computer at the arranged time if you allow it to.



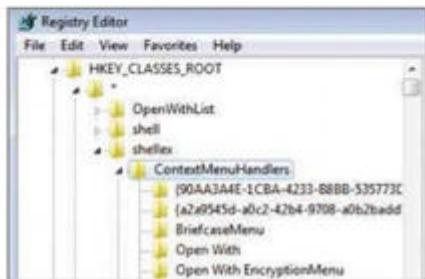
Customise your right-click menu

The right-click context menu gives you easy access to all sorts of options, which change depending on where you are (in a program, on the Desktop) and what software you have installed. The menu can become quite crowded, and will often offer lots of entries you don't need or never use. You can remove the clutter by editing the Registry. Click Start and type `regedit` into the box, then hit Enter to launch the Registry editor (Regedit). Navigate to:

`HKEY_CLASSES_ROOT*\shell\ContextMenuHandlers`

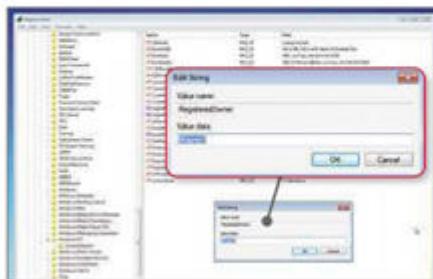
The name of installed programs that have added themselves to the context menu will be listed, and you can select and delete them.

To avoid delving into the Registry manually, you can also edit the right-click menu using the free program Easy Context Menu (www.sordum.org).



Change the registered owner of your PC

If you've bought or inherited a second-hand PC, you might want to change the



name of the previous owner to something else (or, if the registered owner is just "Windows User", to something more personal). This can be done using a simple Registry tweak.

Launch Regedit and navigate to:

`HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows NT\CurrentVersion`

Double-click 'RegisteredOwner' (and, optionally, 'RegisteredOrganization') and change the Value Data to something else.

Remove unwanted options from the Control Panel

If you view the Control Panel contents by 'Large icons' or 'Small icons' (rather than by Category), there's a good chance you'll see entries listed that you never use. These can be hidden using the Group Policy Editor.

Type `GPEdit.msc` on the Start screen in Windows 8+, or in the Search box in Windows 7, and launch it. Go to User Configuration, Administrative Templates, then Control Panel, and double-click 'Hide specified Control



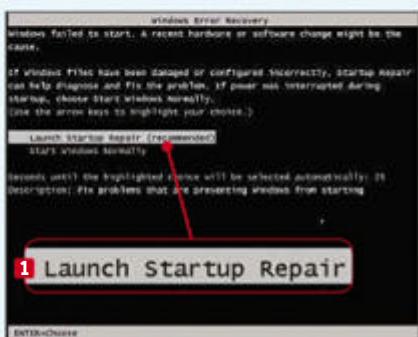
Panel items'. Enable the feature and view the 'List of disallowed Control Panel items' to choose any more you want to hide.

Uninstall Internet Explorer completely

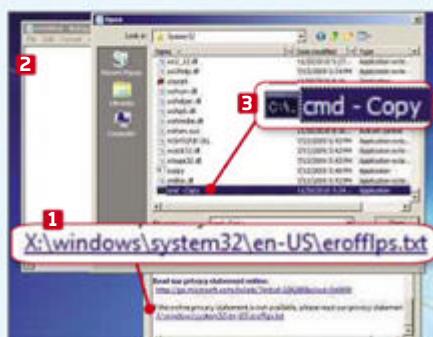
Internet Explorer is an integral part of Windows, but you can get rid of it if you prefer to use another browser. The process is slightly different to the usual way of uninstalling a program. Click the Start button, open the Control Panel, click Programs, then click 'Programs and Features'. In the left pane, click 'Turn Windows features on or off' and deselect Internet Explorer.



MINI WORKSHOP | Get administrator rights on any Windows 7 PC



1 To become the administrator of any Windows 7 PC, hold down the power button when the Starting Windows screen shows, so your computer turns off. Restart your PC and you should see the Windows Error Recovery screen. Select 'Launch Startup Repair (recommended)'. **1** Click Cancel when asked if you want to restore your computer using System Restore.



2 You'll see the message 'Startup Repair cannot repair this computer automatically'. Click 'View problem details' and click the privacy statement text link at the bottom. **1** Notepad will open. **2** Go to File, Open and double-click your system drive. Go to Windows/System32. Select 'All files' for the type, and then find and select 'Cmd'. Press Ctrl+C, then Ctrl+V to create a copy. **3**



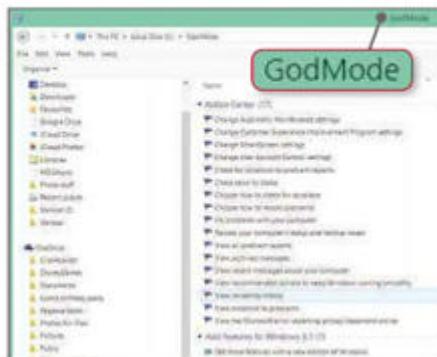
3 Locate 'sethc' and rename it 'sethc1'. Rename the copy of Cmd to 'sethc' **1** and close Notepad. Restart your PC. At the login screen, tap Shift five times. Type `net localgroup Administrators` into the command window, and find an administrator name to use. Type `net user <admin name> * (using the actual name)`. Enter a new password. You can now log in as that administrator.



Unlock hidden PC power

Activate God Mode to access hidden settings

There's a special God Mode tucked away in Windows that displays all your PC's admin tools and control options on a single screen. To activate it in Windows 7, go to Start, Computer and select the C: drive; in Windows 8+, open File Explorer and select the C: drive. Right-click inside the window and select New, Folder. Highlight this folder, press F2, name it GodMode.{ED7BA470-8E54-465E-825C-99712043E01C} and press Enter.



Activate alternative God Modes

There are several alternative modes to the God Mode (described above) that bring all the settings for specific Windows features together in one place to save you searching around for them. This means you can choose only to display the settings you need most often, rather than the all-encompassing God Mode in the previous tip. They are all activated in the same way, but each one uses a different string. Try any of these:

My Computer: {20D04FE0-3AEA-1069-A2D8-08002B30309D}
Default Programs: {17cd9488-1228-4b2f-88ce-4298e93e0966}

Performance: {78F3955E-3B90-4184-BD14-5397C15F1EFC}
Power Settings: {025A5937-A6BE-4686-A844-36FE4BEC8B6D}

Network: {208D2C60-3AEA-1069-A2D7-08002B30309D}
Programs and Features: {15eae92e-f17a-4431-9f28-805e482dafd4}

Location Settings: {00C6D95F-329C-409a-81D7-C46C66EA7F33}
Printers: {2227A280-3AEA-1069-A2DE-08002B30309D}

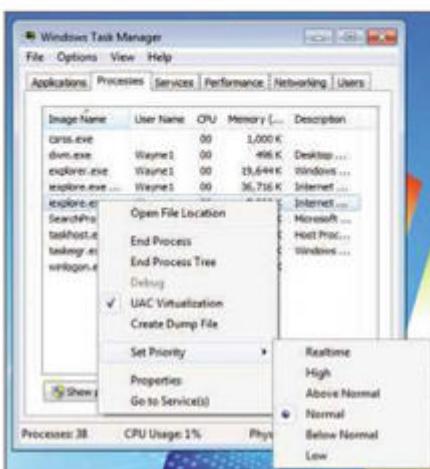
Icons And Notifications: {05d7b0f4-2121-4eff-bf6b-ed3f69b894d9}
Firewall and Security: {4026492F-2F69-46B8-B9BF-5654FC07E423}

Application Connections: {241D7C96-F8BF-4F85-B01F-E2B043341A4B}

Credentials and Logins: {1206F5F1-0569-412C-8FEC-3204630DFB70}

Give important programs extra power

You can prioritise your favourite applications so they receive a more of the available processing power on your PC. Right-click the taskbar and launch Task Manager. Right-click an Application and select 'Go To process' (or 'Go to details' in Windows 8+). Right-click the process you want to prioritise and select Set Priority. This can be Realtime, High, Above Normal, Normal, Below Normal or Low.



Access hidden emoji icons in Windows 8+

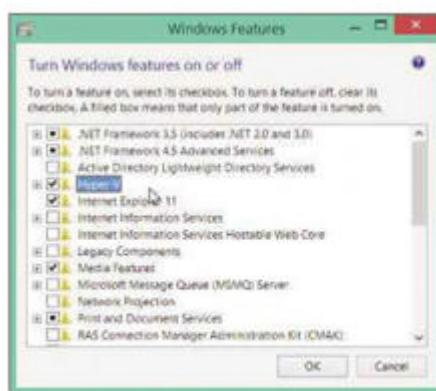
If you're running Windows 8.x on a tablet, such as Microsoft Surface Pro 3, you can access a wealth of emoji via the touchscreen keyboard. You can still access them on a regular Windows 8+ PC, but it takes a little work. Right-click the taskbar, go to Toolbars and select Touch Keyboard. A virtual keyboard will open (with a button for it in the taskbar); just click the emoji key and select the characters you want. As well as the usual smileys, there are hand signs, hearts, cartoon characters, vehicles, food, weather symbols, and many more.

Run Windows XP in Windows 8.1

Windows 8+ comes with Hyper-V,

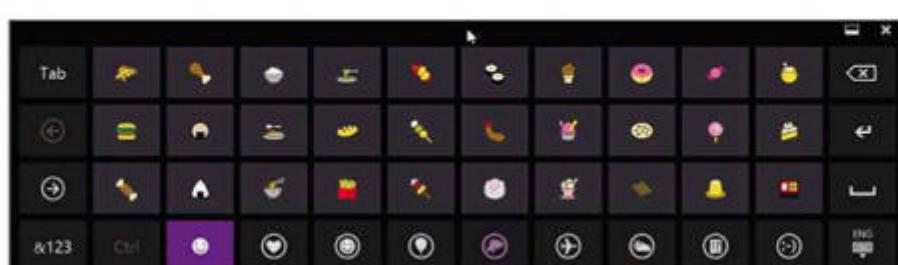
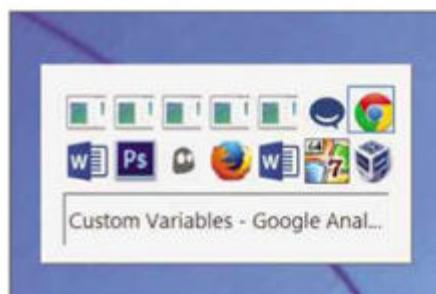
Microsoft's replacement for Windows Virtual PC (the app that lets you run a version of XP under Windows 7).

To use it, type OptionalFeatures from the Start screen to launch the 'Turn Windows features on or off' box. Select Hyper-V in the list and click OK. Once the requested changes have been made, reboot your PC. When Windows loads, go to the Start screen, scroll to the right and click the Hyper-V Manager tile to launch the feature and access XP.



Use the XP task switcher in newer versions of Windows

Okay, so this isn't really 'unlocking hidden power' but it's still a cool feature. If you've used Windows for any length of time, you'll know you can switch between running programs by pressing Alt+Tab. In Windows 7 and 8+, this displays thumbnails of open windows. But hidden away in the newer versions of Windows is the old XP task switcher. To activate it, hold down Alt (and keep it held down), then tap the other Alt button, and press Tab.





Customise how Windows looks

Change the icons for folders

It's easy to change the default icons offered by Windows, and doing so will make it easier to find your favourite folders. Right-click a folder and select 'Properties'. In Windows 7, select the 'Customize' tab, go to the 'Folder icons' section and click

'Change icon'. In Windows 8+, select the Shortcut tab and click 'Change icon'. Pick one of the icons on offer and

click OK. There are different designs to be found in C:\Windows\system32\imageres.dll and C:\Windows\system32\SHELL32.dll

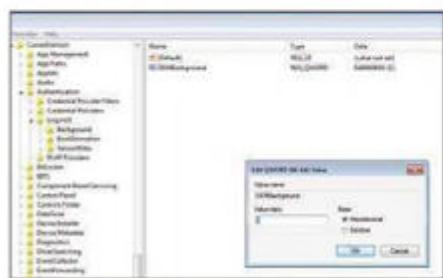
Get Windows 10 icons in older versions of Windows

The latest builds of the Windows 10 Technical Preview have a new and rather striking icon set. If you like them, you can install the new icons in Windows 7 or 8+ using the free program New Win10 Iconpack Installer (bit.ly/win10icon368). You can easily change the icons back to normal if you decide you don't like them.



Relocate the Windows taskbar

Most people have the taskbar in its default location at the bottom of the screen. But if you have a widescreen monitor, you should consider moving the taskbar to the left-hand side of the Desktop, because this will make better use of the available space. To move the bar, right-click it and untick 'Lock the taskbar'. Click and drag the bar up to the left (or right) side. Once it's in place, right-click it and select 'Lock the taskbar' again. The bar can also be positioned at the top of the screen.



bit) Value.

Copy the image you want to use into the %windir%\system32\oobe\info\backgrounds folder (create the info and backgrounds folders if they don't exist). The file will need to be the same shape (aspect ratio) as your monitor, and be less than 256KB in size. Rename the image to 'backgroundDefault.jpg'. When you're done, log off and on again; the new image should appear on the login screen.

Remove the ribbon in File Explorer

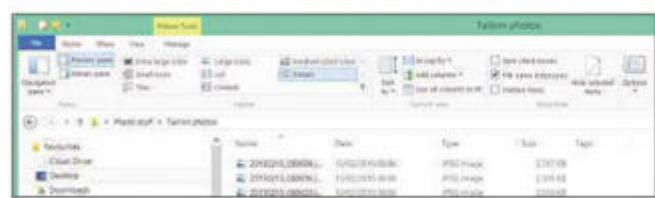
The File Explorer in Windows 8.1 uses Microsoft Office's ribbon design, which can take a little getting used to. You can hide or display it by clicking the tiny arrow next to the Help icon, but if you want to tuck it away permanently, there's a simple tweak you can use. Type GPEdit.msc on the Start screen, launch it and navigate to Computer Configuration, Administrative Templates, Windows Components, File Explorer. Double-click 'Start File Explorer with Ribbon Minimized' and click Enabled. Click OK and, when you restart Explorer, the ribbon will be gone. ■

Customise the Windows 7 login

You can change the look of the login screen via the Windows registry. Launch Regedit and navigate to: HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Authentication\LogonUI\Background Double-click the DWORD (32 bit) Value called OEMBackground (if it's not there you will need to create it via the right-click context menu). Set its value to 1. Next go to:

HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\Software\Policies\Microsoft\Windows\System

Double-click UseOEMBackground and set the value to 1. If it isn't there, create a new DWORD (32



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Never lose another file

Windows hasn't included a decent search tool since XP's Search Assistant. If you miss the helpful cartoon hound, there's plenty of free software to help you out. **Andy Shaw** compares six tools for locating lost files



Agent Ransack | bit.ly/agent368 | ★★★★☆

FEATURES ★★★★☆ PERFORMANCE ★★★★☆ EASE OF USE ★★★★☆

What we liked

There's nothing modern about Agent Ransack's interface, which uses a classic Windows look rather than adding design elements of its own. This makes it functional but familiar, and its classic icons and pop-out tool-tips make finding your way around very simple.

To search for something, just type what you're looking for into the 'File name' or 'Containing text' boxes (or both), choose the folder to start from (it defaults to your entire hard drive if you don't refine it) and press Start.

It's a good idea to put your own filters in place where you can, such as limiting the search to particular file types or locations, because the software will look for the files in every nook and cranny of your hard drive, whether it's likely to find your file there or not.

Once you get your results, the Summary and Hits tabs are particularly useful. Summary gives an overview of the number of files Agent Ransack has searched and the matches found. Hits goes a step further: if you're looking for text in a document, for example, it tells you which lines of the document the text appears on and displays the context.

When you install the software, it's set



The screenshot shows the Agent Ransack interface with a search result window titled '23 files found - [Search: expert in C:*.docx]'. The window includes a toolbar with icons for file operations like Open, Save, Print, and Help. Below the toolbar is a search bar with 'File name:' and 'Containing text:' fields, both containing 'expert'. Underneath is a 'Look in:' dropdown set to 'C:\'. The main area displays a list of 23 found items, each with a preview icon, file name, location, size, and a 'Details' column. The results are sorted by file name. At the bottom, status bars show 'Selected 1 item (15.06 KB)', 'Found: 23 items (432.77 KB)', 'Selected: 1 item (15.06 KB)', 'Search time: 01:47 secs', and 'CAP: N'.

up to run in Expert User mode, but you can untick this option if you prefer a simpler interface. This removes less commonly used features, including the file size and date-filtering options.

How it can be improved

Because Agent Ransack scans everything each time it's set to look for an item, the search is slow but thorough. It took the software nearly two minutes to scan our entire hard drive for files ending in '.docx' that contained a certain word. The onus is on you to refine your search as much as possible.

Also, results aren't shown in any sensible order – in our test searches, we found things showing up in temp folders and the Recycle Bin before we got to the actual files we were looking for.

OUR VERDICT

While it's not the prettiest or the fastest search tool we tested, it is the most thorough. As long as you're happy to wait for your results, Agent Ransack will always find your file.

Copernic Desktop Search Litewww.copernic.com | ★★★★☆

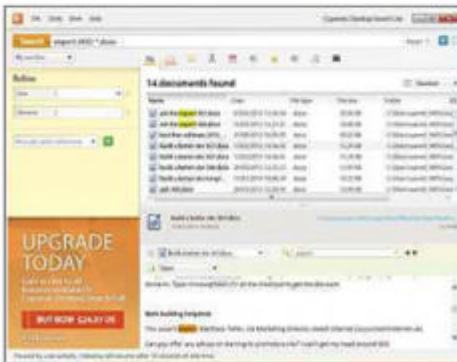
FEATURES ★★★★ PERFORMANCE ★★★★ EASE OF USE ★★★★☆

What we liked

Copernic Desktop Search Lite is a great-looking search tool, but because it's a trimmed-back version of paid-for software, you have to tolerate at an 'upgrade today' advert every time you use it.

When you first install Copernic, it creates an index of your hard drive's contents. To save time, it limits this to a section of your hard drive where your searched-for files are most likely to be located, which includes the Documents folder.

This only took a few minutes on our test PC, but when we searched for our test file, Copernic didn't find it, because it was outside the default index. It's easy to add more folders and re-index the files, but this means you have to anticipate where those lost files might be. However, if a file is in the index, it will be discovered very quickly, and there's a handy preview window that highlights words in documents to show you where they appear.

**How it can be improved**

The free version of the software has a few limitations but they're easily worked around. The most significant restriction is that you can't use it to search for files on external or network drives.

OUR VERDICT

Copernic does the same job as Agent Ransack, but faster. You have to index your files first, though, because it won't find anything that hasn't been catalogued.

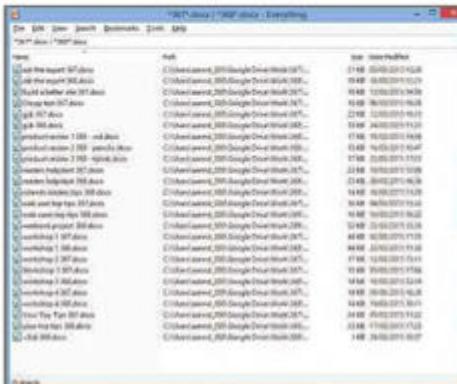
Everything | voidtools.comvoidtools.com | ★★★★☆

FEATURES ★★★★☆ PERFORMANCE ★★★★ EASE OF USE ★★★★☆

What we liked

Everything is a different type of search tool. Instead of waiting for you to type a search term before it starts looking for the results, it lists every file on your hard drive and filters out the irrelevant ones as you type.

The great thing about this is that it's totally inclusive. You know the file you're looking for is there, it's just a case of weeding out all the wrong ones until you get to it. You can do this by adding your own filter controls. At the most basic level, this means using the drop-down menu on the right of the search bar to pick specific types of files, such as audio, video or document. If you want to take this a step further, you can type in wildcards, such as *.docx (which filters out any file that isn't a Word document) and use logical operators such as 'and' and 'not'. If there are specific searches that you perform a lot, you can bookmark them for future reference.

**How it can be improved**

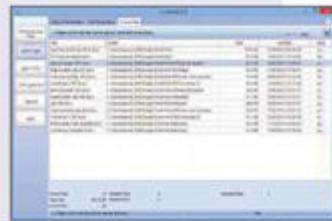
Everything doesn't search the content of files. This is a huge gap in your search arsenal and will probably mean you'll need another search tool installed alongside this one.

OUR VERDICT

Everything's reverse approach to search is refreshing but while it's excellent for sifting out files from the chaos of your hard drive, it can't search a file's contents.

BEST OF THE REST**LookDisk**bit.ly/lookd368

LookDisk isn't quite as sophisticated as Agent Ransack, but it's completely portable and we found it a little faster. It makes it easier to set up searches but it doesn't offer a preview of any files that are found. This isn't helpful if you're looking to find something like text in a file, where the context of a particular word can help you find what you're looking for.

**DocFetcher**docfetcher.sourceforge.net

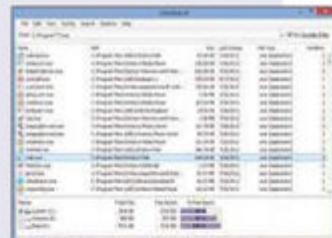
DocFetcher is an open source alternative to Copernic, which indexes some or all of your hard drive to perform super-speedy searches.



Although it looks promising, its main drawback is that you must have Java installed in order to run it, which is a bit old fashioned and will put a lot of people off.

UltraSearchbit.ly/ultra368

Instead of indexing your files, UltraSearch uses the Master File Table (MFT) to find what you're looking for. While this makes it fast at tracking down files,



it can't search their content. If you don't need a file finder that can search content, we'd still recommend Everything over UltraSearch because it's just as fast and we preferred the way Everything works by weeding out the files you don't want rather than searching for the one you do.

Stream unlimited music for free

You don't need to subscribe to a streaming service or put up with annoying ads to enjoy as much free music as you want. **Robert Irvine** explains how to expand your listening

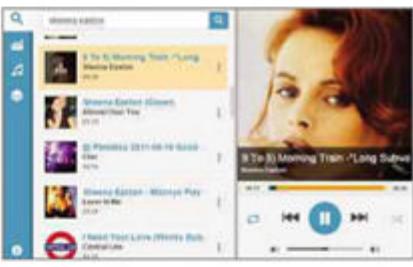
Turn Chrome into a free music player

There are lots of music-streaming services to choose from, but unless you pay a monthly subscription, you have to tolerate adverts between songs. Happily, this isn't the case with Playr (www.myplayr.com), a new Chrome extension that lets you enjoy endless listening at MP3 quality, with no catches. Search for an artist to find and play all available tracks by them, with no ads, DJ patter or lengthy pauses. Alternatively, you can create playlists from songs by different artists; stream unlimited music of a



specific genre, such as pop, rock or classical; browse the

most popular tracks; and hear cover versions of your favourite tunes. Playr's clever design means you never need to leave your browser or current page, and can play, pause and skip songs using keyboard shortcuts. It even offers System Tray notifications, so you can see what's playing without opening the add-on. Install it now!

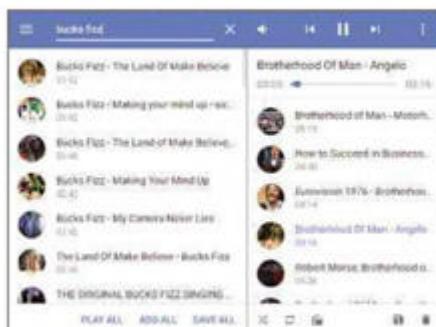


Stream music non-stop from YouTube

YouTube is undoubtedly the best way to watch and listen to music for free. If you don't have time to visit the site every time you want to hear a song, you can



stream tracks directly to your browser using the brilliant Chrome and Opera add-on Streamus (streamus.com). This lets you search for and play songs on YouTube, and build playlists without having to open the site or watch any videos, effectively turning it into an unlimited free music-streaming service – and one without adverts, too.



To ensure you get the best sound quality possible, go to Options, Settings and set 'Song quality' to Highest. You can also choose to display your playlists in a browser tab rather than in the add-on, and search for tracks by typing streamus followed by the artist or song name into your address bar.

Sadly, Streamus isn't yet available for

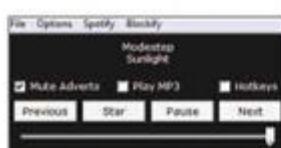
Firefox, but the splendid add-on FireTube (bit.ly/firetube368) also lets you stream songs from YouTube, create playlists and control playback using your keyboard. It offers useful options for viewing videos as well as listening to them, and for downloading tracks to your PC to keep forever. There's also an Android version of FireTube, which costs £1.99 (bit.ly/firetubeandroid368).

Mute adverts on Spotify using Blockify

The free version of Spotify (www.spotify.com/uk) is a fantastic way to discover and play music, provided you're willing to sit through occasional adverts. But if you find them repetitive and annoying, and you want to enjoy uninterrupted playback, you can use a sneaky tool called EZBlocker (bit.ly/ezblocker368) to mute all Spotify ads. It automatically detects when an ad begins and cuts the volume for the duration, without affecting other

sound on your PC. You can add new ads to your blacklist, so you never hear them again, and the tool can also be used on Android (bit.ly/ezblockerandroid368).

If you're using an older version of Spotify (before



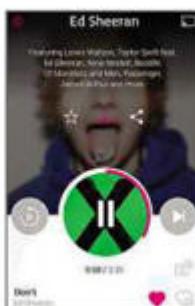
v1.0), try Blockify (tribe.nu/Blockify.html), which works in a similar way to EZBlocker, but includes the clever option to play your own MP3s while ads are muted, so you can avoid gaps between songs.

Create your own free radio stations

We've long been fans of the free streaming service Blinkbox Music (www.blinkboxmusic.com), which lets you listen to an eclectic choice of radio stations, from Pure Pop to Male Jazz Icons, and generate personal stations based on your music tastes. In January, Tesco sold Blinkbox Music to an Australian company called Guvera, which has reassured users



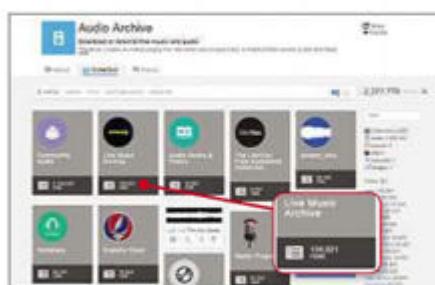
that they needn't worry about the future of the service (at least for now). This means that Blinkbox Music remains a great source of unlimited free mainstream music, both in your browser and on your phone via its app for Android, iOS and Windows Phone. This includes useful options to play stations offline, and to stream music



from your device to your Chromecast. The Pro version of Blinkbox Music removes ads and lets you compile playlists. You can try it for free for 30 days, after which it costs just £1 a week, which is considerably cheaper than the £9.99 per month charged by other streaming services.

Stream classic concerts and radio shows

The Internet Archive (archive.org) is an excellent source of rare and



unusual audio, and its recent redesign makes it much easier to browse. It hosts more than 139,000 high-quality concerts, which you can download in various formats (including MP3, FLAC and OGG) or stream in your browser for free. It's true that many of these gigs involve old hippie bands such as the Grateful Dead and New Riders of the Purple Sage playing for what seems like days at a time, but there are also some real gems. You can filter the concerts by artist, year and keyword.

Elsewhere in its Audio Archive, the site offers educational podcasts; digitised versions of old 78rpms and cylinder recordings; and loads of vintage radio. You can also hear classic episodes of



shows such as *Gunsmoke*, *Sherlock Holmes* stories featuring Basil Rathbone and the infamous Orson Welles broadcast of *War of the Worlds*.

Listen to your own music on the move

Although it's exciting to discover new artists, you can't beat songs from your own music collection. Storing them on your phone takes up valuable space, but Google Play Music (play.google.com/music) offers the perfect solution with its free "online music locker", which lets you upload 50,000 tracks, including songs in your iTunes library, to stream to your Android phone or tablet, or another computer.

Google Play Music also has an All Access subscription service for discovering and buying new music, which costs £9.99 per month. There's a free 30-day trial that includes the new YouTube Music Key beta, which lets you watch videos alongside the songs you stream.



DISCOVER THE MOST STREAMED SONGS

The UK singles chart now counts the number of times a song is streamed on services such as Spotify, Deezer and Xbox Music, as well as the number of physical and digital sales.

You can find out which tracks were streamed most in the last week, and any other week between May 2012 and now, by visiting the recently relaunched Official Charts (www.officialcharts.com), which was our 'Site of the fortnight' in Issue 366 (bit.ly/webuser366). You'll find the latest combined Official Singles Chart Top 100, as well as charts for Streaming (including videos) and Audio



Streams. Select 'Audio Streams (pre-July 2014)' and pick a date to see what was top of the streaming chart that week. The most streamed artist in the UK is currently Arctic Monkeys, but with more people switching to streaming, don't expect that record to last long!

Make yourself invisible to friends

Want to hide your browsing, messaging and shopping from friends, family and co-workers? **Jonathan Parkyn** reveals easy tweaks for concealing your online activities

Stop friends knowing you've seen their messages

Most web users know that you can keep your online activities private by using a VPN, but this is akin to using a sledgehammer to crack a nut. Most of the time, you don't need to take yourself off the grid entirely; you just want to keep certain information about you and your activities from becoming publicly available. For instance, while using a messaging tool, you may not want everyone to know that you've read a particular message, because it puts pressure on you to reply. A VPN won't help in this case, but there are other options that will.

If you're using Facebook on your PC, you can use a Chrome extension called Facebook Hide Seen (bit.ly/facebookhide368) to block other people from seeing when you've read a message, so you can respond in your own time.



If you use WhatsApp on your phone, there's a built-in setting to stop messages being shown as read. Tap the menu button in WhatsApp, choose Settings, Account, then Privacy. Deselect the 'Read receipts' option (this is only available in the Android version) and switch your Last Seen setting to Nobody. The downside, however, is that

you won't know when people have read messages you send them.

Alternatively, there's a useful Android app called Shinobi (bit.ly/shinobi368)

that lets you read messages in various messaging tools, including WhatsApp, Facebook, Skype, Viber and more, without flagging them as 'read' or 'last read'.

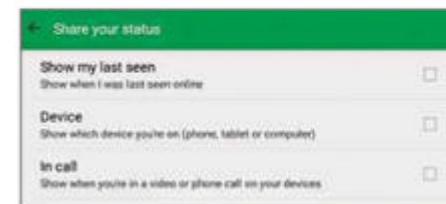
Conceal your online status in messaging apps

There are lots of reasons to hide your online status – perhaps you're busy and don't want to be disturbed, but still want to send outgoing messages. Thankfully, most messaging tools offer built-in options for this. In WhatsApp, for example, you can open the privacy options described in the previous tip and set your status to Nobody.

You can use a similar trick in Skype. Tap your profile photo – or click the green tick by your

profile photo if you're using the Desktop version of Skype – and select Invisible to mask your online status and avoid messages and calls.

Google Hangouts recently adopted a



policy of broadcasting its users' online status. To switch this off on your phone or tablet, tap the menu button in the app, then tap Settings, your account name and 'Share your status', then remove any ticks you find.

Keep past and future Amazon purchases private

For those of us who share a computer, the Amazon homepage can be a minefield, especially around birthdays and Christmas, because it displays items you've looked at that you might prefer to keep secret, such as presents for family members. You can fix this by



signing out of your account once you've finished shopping or by switching off your browsing history altogether. To

do this, go to Your Account, click the Your Browsing History Settings link under Personalisation, and click the 'Turn off browsing history' button.

Amazon also makes recommendations on its homepage based on products you've bought and viewed. To stop this, choose Improve Your Recommendations on the Your Account page and select the 'Don't use for recommendations' option next to every item you've



do a bit of homework beforehand. To view LinkedIn profiles anonymously, hover your mouse over your own profile photo in the top-right corner and select 'Privacy & Settings'. Under Profile, click 'Select what others see when you've viewed their profile', tick the 'You will be totally anonymous' option and click 'Save changes'. Note that this will also prevent you from identifying anyone who looks at your profile, which seems a fair trade-off.

Stop people seeing what you're listening to

Spotify is great for sharing your favourite tunes with friends or for finding out what others are listening to. But what about those guilty pleasures? Do you really want all your cool, Captain Beefheart-loving friends finding out you've been sneakily listening to Olivia Newton John?

For a quick and easy way to temporarily hide your current activity, click File and choose Private Session in the Desktop app or, in the mobile and web apps, tap the menu button, choose Settings and switch on Private Session. On the same screen, you can also apply more permanent privacy settings such as disabling Facebook and Last.fm scrobbling. In the Desktop app, you'll find further privacy options under Edit,



previously purchased.

Amazon's Wish List feature can also compromise your online privacy

because, by default, its entire contents are publicly available, meaning anyone who searches for your name can see



what you're wishing for. You can change this by opening your Wish List, clicking

Manage Your Lists and selecting Private (meaning no-one can see it) or Shared (meaning it can only be seen by people you share the URL with), before clicking Submit.

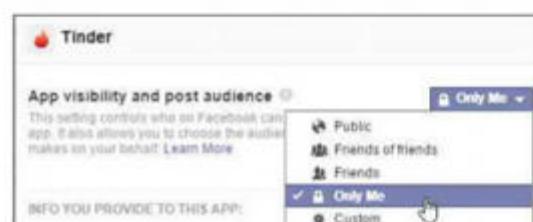
Browse LinkedIn profiles anonymously

LinkedIn lets you know who has been viewing your profile, but you may sometimes want to view another person's profile without them knowing, such as if you've got an imminent meeting or a job interview and want to



STAY PRIVATE ON TINDER

Tinder (www.gotinder.com) is a popular dating tool for adults that uses your Facebook profile to help you find the perfect partner. But just because you're looking for that special someone doesn't mean you want everyone else knowing about it. By default, however, when you link a third-party app or service such as Tinder to your Facebook profile, other people can see that you use the app and it may even start posting on friends' timelines on your behalf. There's currently no way of using Tinder without Facebook, so if you want to



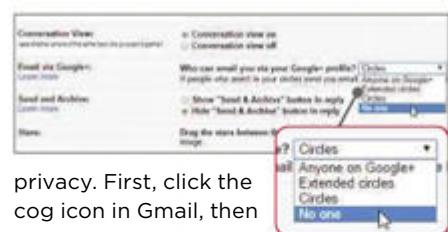
keep your private life private, go to Facebook, click the down arrow in the top-right corner and choose Settings, then Apps. Click 'Edit settings' next to Tinder and make sure that 'App visibility and post audience' is set to Only Me. While you're at it, tighten all your Facebook privacy settings or, better still, set up an entirely separate Facebook profile to use with Tinder.

Preferences. For example, you can make all playlists private or disable the 'Publish my activity on Spotify' setting.

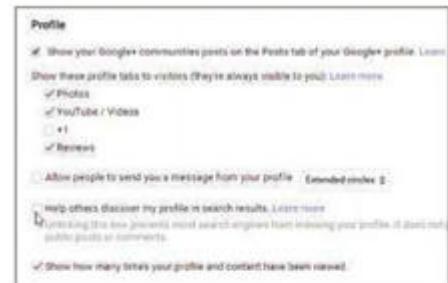
Stop Google+ members emailing you

Last year, Google's changes to Gmail meant anyone who had added you to a Google+ circle could send you an email, even if you didn't know or like them. And because, by default, your Google+ profile is searchable, anyone can add you to a circle and then email you.

There are a couple of things you can do to stop this flagrant intrusion of your



privacy. First, click the cog icon in Gmail, then go to Settings. On the General tab, find the option 'Email via Google+', change it from 'Anyone on Google+' to 'No one', and click Save Changes at the bottom of the page. Now go to Google+ (plus.google.com), click the drop-down menu on the left and select Settings. Scroll down to Profile and untick the option 'Help others discover my profile in search results'. ■





Broadband Deals

Call FREE on 0800 083 2357 to switch your broadband

	Provider	Package name	Monthly price	Contract length	Broadband speed	Allowance	First-year cost*
1		EE: Broadband & Calls	£9.95 (£2.50 for 12 months)	12 months	17Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited **	CHEAPEST £30.00
2		Plusnet: Broadband & Calls	£9.99 (£2.50 for 12 months)	12 months	17Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited	£30.00
3		TalkTalk: Broadband	£3.50 (6 months HALF PRICE)	18 months	17Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited	£31.50
4		Sky: Broadband & Calls	£7.50 (12 months HALF PRICE)	12 months	17Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited	£45.00
5		TalkTalk Fibre Broadband	£13.50 (6 months FREE)	18 months	38Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited	£81.00
6		Virgin: Broadband & Calls	£17.50 (12 months HALF PRICE)	18 months	50Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited **	£105.00
7		Plusnet: Fibre Broadband & Calls	£14.99 (£3.75 for 6 months)	18 months	38Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited	£112.44
8		Sky: Fibre Broadband & Calls	£20.00 (12 months HALF PRICE)	18 months	38Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited	£120.00
9		EE: Fibre Broadband & Calls	£19.95 (£9.95 for 6 months)	18 months	38Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited	£179.40
10		Virgin: Broadband & Calls	£30.00 (£24.50 for 12 months)	18 months	152Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited **	FASTEST £294.00

Call 0800 083 2357 or visit www.broadbandgenie.co.uk/webuser

Terms & Conditions apply - see ISP sites for details

*First-year cost does not include line rental. Cost is calculated at monthly price x12 with all introductory offers subtracted. Additional charges incurred outside of free inclusive calls not included in first-year cost.

** Fair-usage or restriction policy applies.

Data supplied by www.broadbandgenie.co.uk. Correct as of 24 March 2015.

Broadband Genie's helpline is powered by Simplify Digital, the Ofcom-accredited switching service



Take a Screen Break

Technology moves so quickly that it's easy to forget big stories from only a few years ago. This issue we're asking: how well do you remember 2002?



1 How many people across the world were estimated to be online in 2002: 347 million, 569 million or 894 million?

2 What percentage of the browser market did Internet Explorer claim in 2002?



3 Roughly how many minutes per day did the average person spend online in 2002?



4 In July 2002, Apple launched its second-generation iPod, which was the first to be compatible with Windows. But what was the storage capacity of the top-end model?

5 Which music-streaming website, famous for its 'scrobbling' feature, launched in 2002?

6 In September 2002, software developers started public testing on a project called Phoenix. What was the program later renamed?

7 What accounted for 30 per cent of email messages sent in 2002, according to BBC News?

8 What was the name of the flat-screen desktop computer (pictured) launched by Apple in January 2002?



9 Which popular free alternative to Microsoft Office launched on 1 May 2002?

10 According to Google, what was the most searched-for term of 2002? Clue: it's more to do with web slinging than browsing!

11 What's the name of the social network that launched in March 2002 and soon attracted three million users?



12 Which image-viewing program (logo pictured), bought by Google two years later, was released in 2002?

CAN YOU IDENTIFY THESE POPULAR WEBSITES FROM 2002?



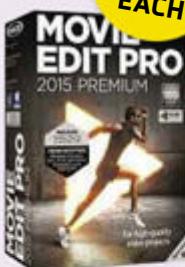
Get the answers online at www.webuser.co.uk/quiz368

COMPETITIONS

WIN 1 OF 4

Magix Movie Edit Pro 2015 Premium

New in the 2015 version of Magix Movie Edit Pro Premium is the NewBlue Titler EX plug-in, which lets you create Hollywood-style titles, captions and credits. The program now has 64bit support; automatically fixes distortions; and lets you simultaneously edit up to four cameras. To enter, email webusercomp@dennis.co.uk with 'movie' in the subject line. For more info visit www.magix.com/gb and follow @MAGIX_INT on Twitter.



WORTH
£99.99
EACH

WIN 1 OF 3

Pure Jongo T4X speaker

Winner of the Silver Award in our Multiroom audio speakers Group Test in Issue 367, the Pure Jongo T4X provides excellent sound quality with a strong bass. It plays music from any Bluetooth-enabled device or via its own app. To enter, email webusercomp@dennis.co.uk with 'jongo' in the subject line. For more info visit www.pure.com and follow @Pure_Insider on Twitter.



WORTH
£125
EACH



Practical WebUser

17 pages of workshops, tips, projects and problem solving

Use the new Google Contacts

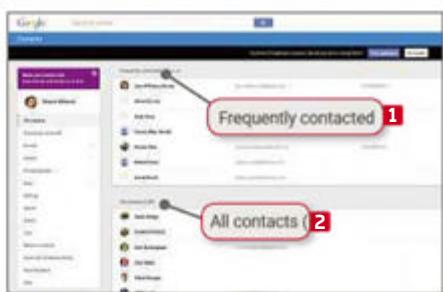
contacts.google.com/preview

Google's overhauled contacts manager makes it easy to keep track of people and access their contact details. Here's how to get started

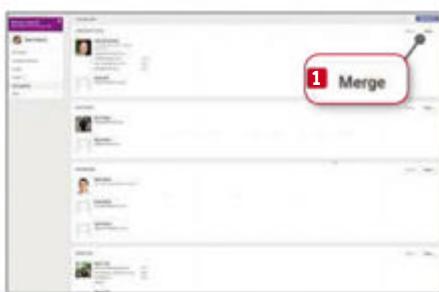
You probably have contact details for friends, colleagues and acquaintances stored in lots of different places, both on the web and on your phone; and you probably have different means of contacting those people. Maintaining a central location for all your contacts – however often or rarely you communicate with them – can be really useful, which is where the new

Google Contacts comes in.

The revamped contacts manager (currently available as a preview) lets you quickly find the information you require; merge duplicate entries (which is a common problem when you combine contacts from more than one place); and ensure all your contacts' details are fully up to date by using Google's own profile information.



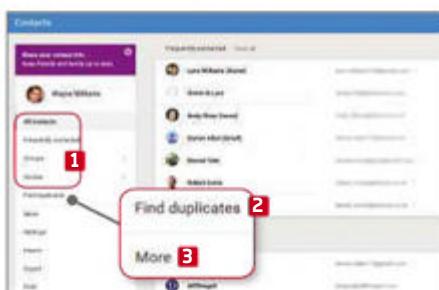
1 Go to contacts.google.com/preview and sign in using your main Google account details. All the contacts Google has for you will be displayed. 'Frequently contacted' **1** are shown at the top, with 'All contacts' underneath. **2** You can see email addresses, phone numbers and current job details.



2 Google Contacts will tell you how many duplicates it has found and give you the chance to merge them. To do this, click the 'View duplicates' button. All the contact details for each person will be displayed. Assuming Google hasn't mixed up two different people, click Merge **1** to make the change.



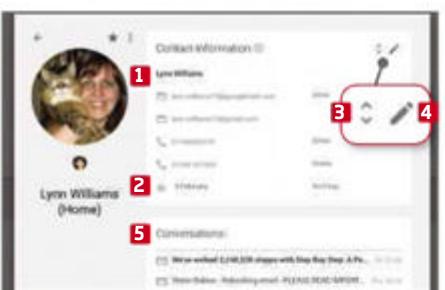
3 If all the suggestions are correct, you can simply 'Merge all'. **1** If Google has made a mistake and is trying to merge unrelated contacts, click the Dismiss button. **2** If you make a change by accident, you'll be given the chance to undo it. **3** You can refresh the list of duplicates at any time. **4**



4 The sidebar provides instant access to 'All contacts', 'Frequently contacted' and Google+ Groups and Circles. **1** You can also look for duplicates. **2** The More link **3** opens additional options, although many features such as importing, exporting and printing weren't available in the preview at the time of writing.

SHARE YOUR CONTACT INFO

You can share your up-to-date info with Google+ circles, the public (not recommended) or a customised selection of people



5 Click a contact to see a card showing any contact details you have for them **1** and their birthday (if known). **2** You can break down the info into sources (details you've added yourself and data pulled from Google+) **3** and also edit the details. **4** Previous conversations with the person are shown below. **5**



SEARCH

Instead of browsing all your contacts, you can search for someone by name. Matches appear as you type

HANGOUTS

Google's equivalent of Skype is built into Contacts, so you can start chats and video calls

ADD NEW CONTACT

To manually add someone, click the blue plus sign, then type their name. Potential matches on Google+ will be displayed



6 The edit screen lets you change a contact's name **1** and photo. **2** You can add details (nickname, company, job title) **3** and contact methods. Remove old contact information by hovering over it and clicking the cross on the right. You can also add someone to a Google+ Group. **4**

7 To get in touch with someone, click their email address. If they have several, click the down arrow and choose one from the list. You can phone them using Google Hangouts (you'll be prompted to install the required plug-in if you haven't already). Hover over a contact to display additional options. **1**

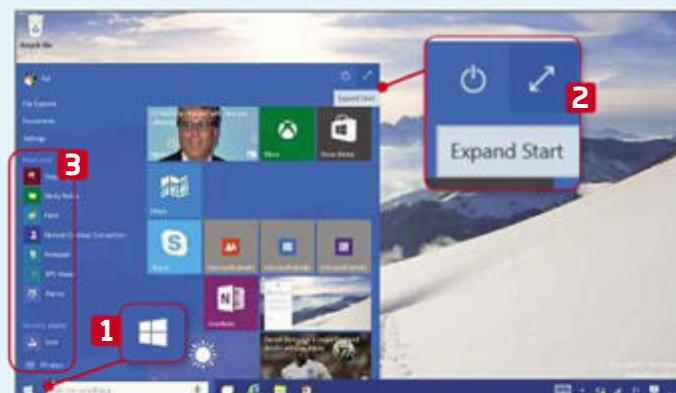
8 Star a contact **1** to add it to a new Starred section at the top. **2** You can also add someone to a Google+ circle. **3** The list is likely to include lots of people you don't really know. You can quickly remove them by clicking the More Actions button on the right and selecting Delete. **4**



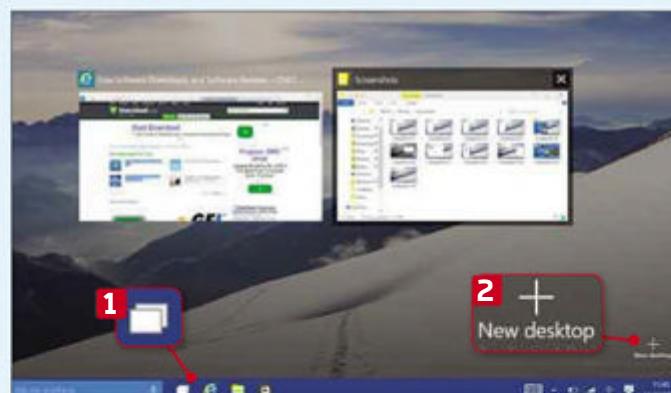
Discover new tools in the latest Windows 10 Preview

Windows 10 Technical Preview: bit.ly/windows368 | 15 mins | Windows 10

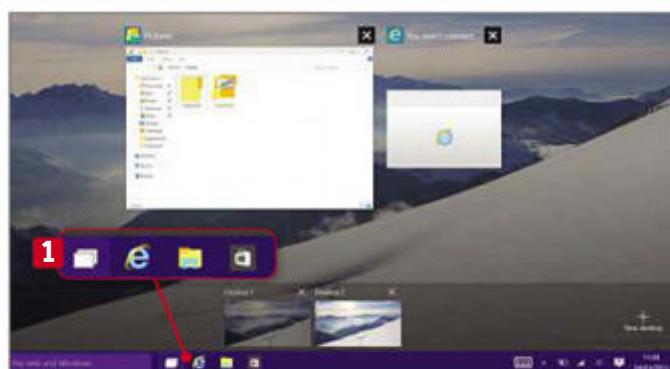
Since we covered Windows 10 in Issues 364 (bit.ly/webuser364) and 365 (bit.ly/webuser365), Microsoft has released a new preview version of the operating system for prospective users to test. Although there's still no sign of the eagerly anticipated Spartan browser, build 10041 introduces plenty of other exciting new features including UK support for the voice-activated personal assistant Cortana and handwriting input for tablet users. The operating system's Virtual Desktop tool has also been drastically improved by the introduction of window filtering, which means only the programs you have open on a particular Desktop are displayed in that Desktop's taskbar. There's also a new network settings menu, which makes it easier than ever to join a wireless network or switch your device to Airplane Mode. In this Workshop, we take you through all these features and more, showing you how to get the very best out of the latest version of Windows 10.



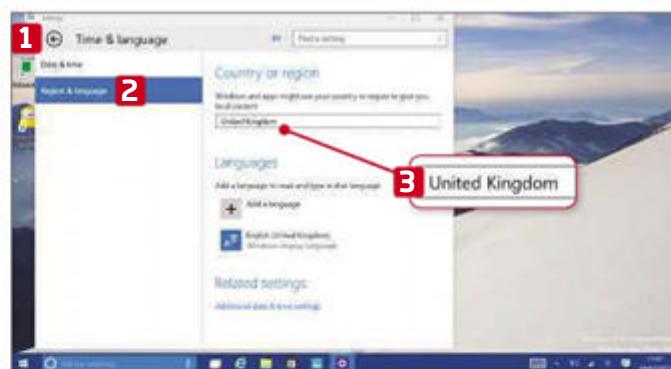
1 Build 10041 of Windows 10 introduces transparency to the Start screen. Click Start, **1** select the Expand Start button **2** and the background becomes more see-through. To pin an app to the Start menu, you can now drag it to a position of your choice from the 'All apps' or 'Most used' **3** lists.



2 Select the 'Task view' button **1** from Windows' taskbar. You can now create a Virtual Desktop by dragging and dropping a window straight to the 'New desktop' icon. **2** Once it's been created, you can drag and drop windows between your Desktops.



3 Unlike the previous build of Windows 10, this one filters your taskbar so that you only see the running windows **1** for the particular Virtual Desktop you're using. The same change has also been made to the Alt+Tab screen, making it easier to see what you're currently working on.



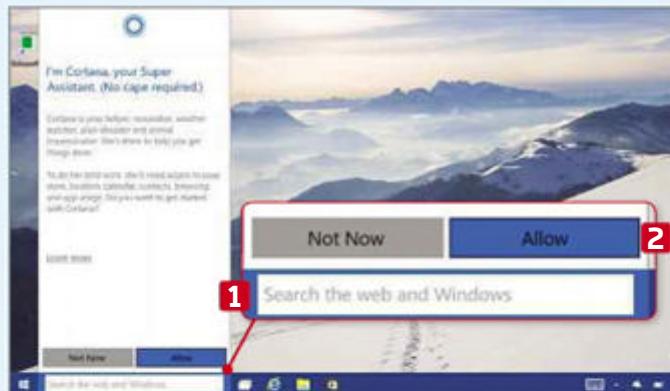
4 Microsoft's voice-activated personal assistant Cortana is now available in the UK. If you previously set your location as United States in order to try the service, open Settings, 'Time & language', **1** then 'Region & language' **2** to change it back to United Kingdom. **3**



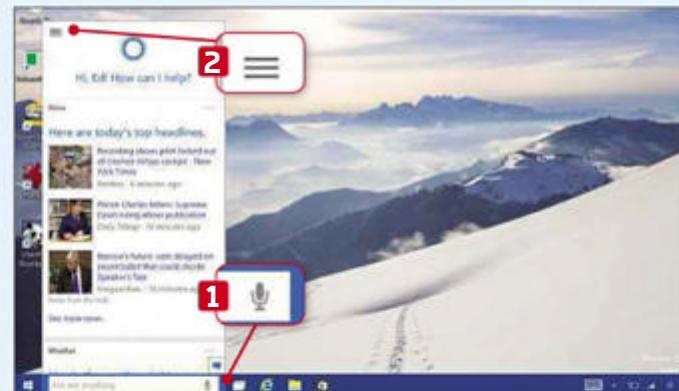
EXPERT TIP

Edward Munn says

At the time of writing, build 10041 was only available to users who choose Microsoft's 'Fast' update option. To ensure that you have all the latest updates as soon as possible, you can activate this option by opening Settings, 'Update & recovery' and 'Advanced options', then selecting Fast from the 'Choose how preview builds are installed' drop-down menu.



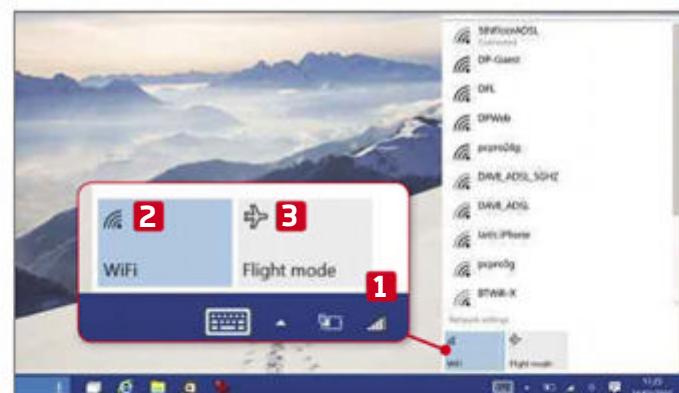
5 Make sure that your default language is also set to English (United Kingdom). To activate Cortana, select the search bar **1** on your Desktop, click Allow **2** twice and enter your name. Select Enter, click the button to hear Cortana say your name, choose Sounds Good and Done.



6 You can use Cortana to search for apps, files and settings, as well as searching the web. To ask a question, select the microphone icon **1** and speak when the search bar's text changes to 'Listening...' To change Cortana's settings, click the search bar and select its menu button. **2**



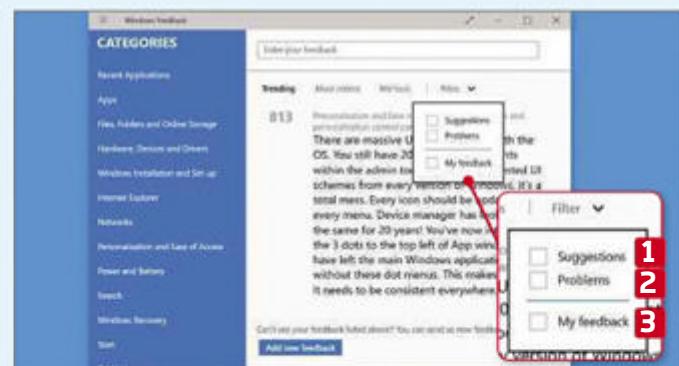
7 The latest build of Windows 10 also introduces handwriting input for tablets. To use it, select the change-input button and then the handwriting icon when the virtual keyboard is active. It suggests words as you write **1** and there are also buttons for space, **2** return **3** and backspace. **4**



8 A new Network fly-out menu has been added to the taskbar so that you can quickly access your network settings by clicking the network icon. **1** As well as letting you connect to Wi-Fi networks, this menu lets you toggle WiFi **2** or 'Flight mode' **3** on and off.



9 Microsoft's Photos app has been updated so that the Live Tile **1** on your Start screen shows images from OneDrive as well as those stored to your device. There's also support for RAW file formats and you can use the arrow keys, Page Up, Page Down and Tab to navigate the app.



10 Improvements have been also made to the Windows Feedback app, which lets you tell Microsoft about problems. A new tool lets you filter Suggestions, **1**, Problems **2** or your own feedback, **3** and you can click 'Me too' on posts that you agree with.

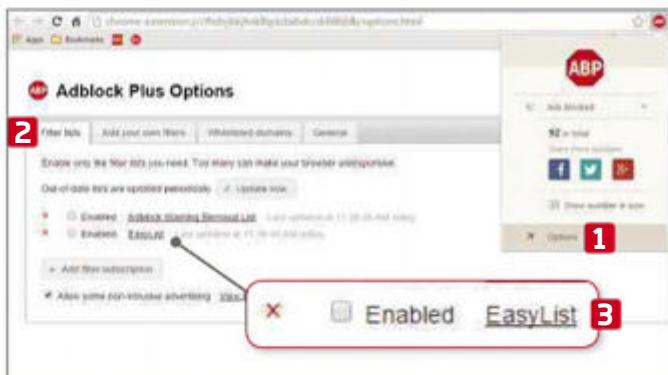


Workshop 3

Block the worst ads, but not on sites you love

Adverts can be a nuisance, but they provide money for sites that give away content for free. Ad blockers such as Adblock Plus remove adverts by default, but if we don't want our favourite sites to close through underfunding, we

Adblock Plus: adblockplus.org | **15 mins** | **Chrome**

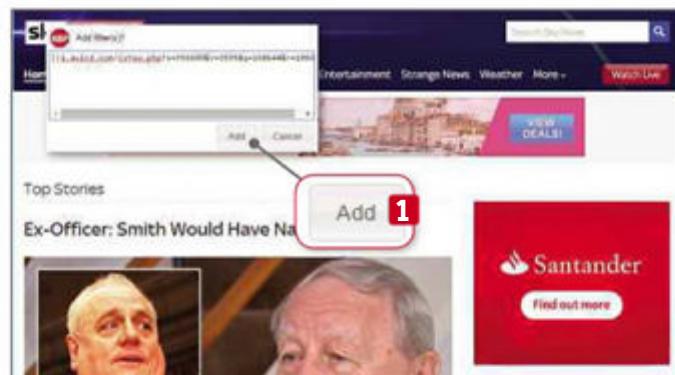


1 Adblock Plus is designed to work by automatically blocking adverts, so you have to start by turning this off. Click the toolbar icon and choose Options. **1** Click the 'Filter lists' tab **2** and untick any enabled lists. By default, you'll need to untick EasyList. **3** Ads will now load on all sites.

might have to take a more liberal approach. This involves blocking the ads we hate while leaving our favourite sites unblocked so they can earn money from our visits.



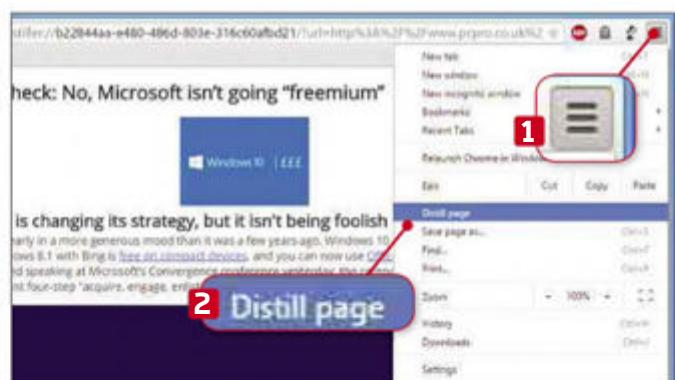
Chrome



2 Get into the habit of blocking ads when they annoy you. Click the icon and select 'Block element'. Move your mouse to the ad to give it a yellow tint. Click it, then click Add in the 'Add filter(s)' box. **1** If sites stop earning revenue from obnoxious ads, perhaps they'll change their ways.



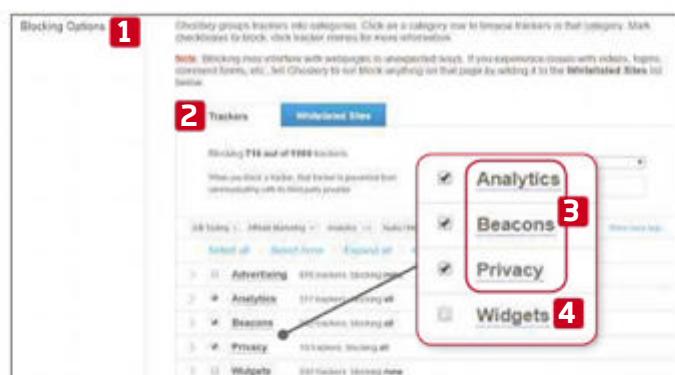
3 Evernote Clearly (bit.ly/clearly368) gets rid of screen clutter without blocking ads. Install it and click the button. **1** A new distraction-free page opens on top of the existing page, so adverts are still visible below it. Click the Show Themes button **2** to choose how you want it to look.



4 This decluttering feature is coming to a future version of Chrome, but if you want it now without installing another add-on, follow PC World's instructions at bit.ly/distill368, then click the menu button **1** and choose 'Distill page' **2** for the less cluttered version.



5 Blocking the worst ads will stop them tracking you, but websites also use other tools to do this. You can restrict tracking to visible ads only with the Ghostery add-on (bit.ly/ghost368). Once it's installed, click the toolbar icon, click the cog, **1** then click the Options button. **2**



6 On the General tab, scroll down to Blocking Options. **1** On the Trackers tab, **2** tick to block Analytics, Beacons and Privacy. **3** Ticking Advertising will also block ads but you're already blacklisting them with Adblock Plus, so keep this unticked. Blocking Widgets will hide social sharing buttons. **4**

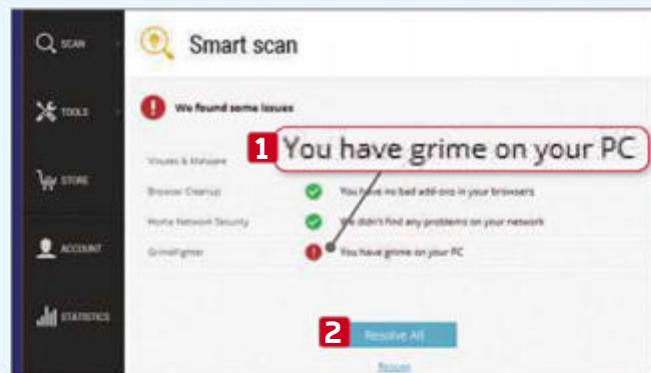
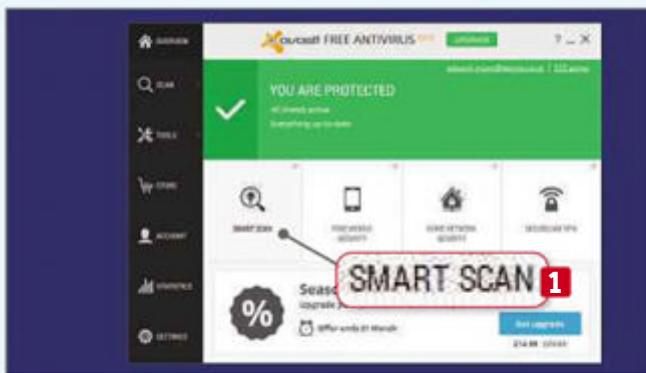


Explore Avast Free 2015's new features

Avast Free Antivirus won the Bronze Award in our Group Test of anti-virus software in issue 363 (bit.ly/webuser363), outperforming all the other free programs we looked at. The 2015 version of the software

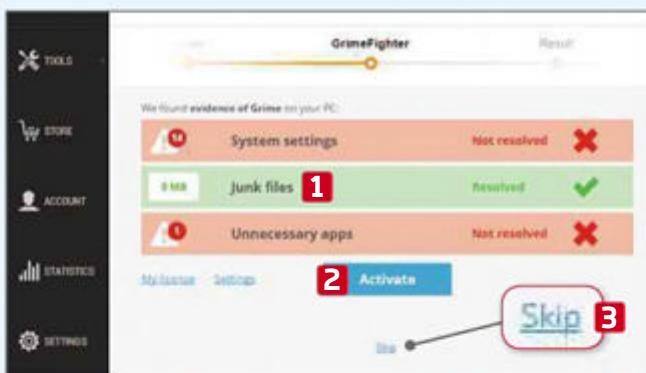
Avast Free Antivirus 2015: www.avast.com | **15 minutes** | **XP, Vista, 7, 8.1+**

received a major overhaul and introduced a range of new tools. In this Workshop, we show you how to make the most of its best new features.



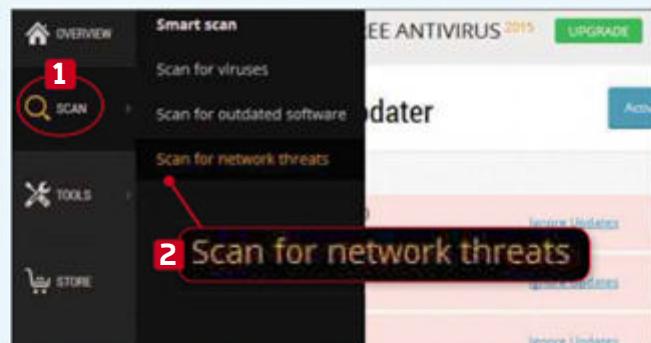
1 Download, install and run Avast Free Antivirus 2015. Smart Scan is a new feature that integrates all Avast's on-demand scans into one. Click its button **1** to see a progress bar while Avast runs its Virus & Malware, Browser Cleanup, Home Network Security and GrimeFighter scans.

2 If Avast finds anything suspect, a screen appears after the scans are completed showing the location of the problem. **1** Click the blue Resolve All button **2** to have the program take you through the necessary steps to fix the problems.



3 By default, GrimeFighter clears your junk files, **1** but you'll need to buy a licence for the tool (for £29.99) if you want it to delete unnecessary apps and optimise your System settings. To do this, click the blue Activate button; **2** otherwise, select Skip. **3**

4 A screen appears showing that Smart Scan has finished. To exclude GrimeFighter from future scans, click Settings, Tools and turn GrimeFighter's switch to off. **1** From this screen, you can also disable Browser Cleanup, **2** which looks for bad browser add-ons.



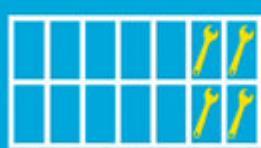
5 To enable Avast's tool for updating outdated software on your PC, turn on Software Updater from this menu. To run it, select Scan, then 'Scan for outdated software'. A list of out-of-date software is displayed; just click the Update button **1** for any you want to update.

6 New to Avast Free Antivirus 2015, the Home Security Network scan checks for security problems on your home network that are not necessarily isolated to your device. To run only this type of scan, select Scan **1** and choose 'Scan for network threats'. **2**

Weekend Project

Get to grips with some serious PC DIY to boost your computer's performance

MTWTFSS

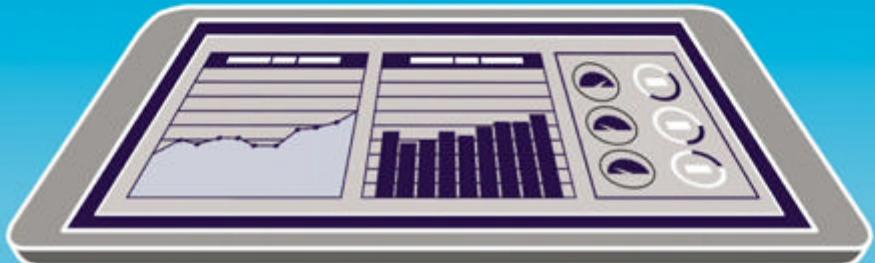


How to...

Turn your house into a smarthome

The latest home-automation devices let you control your utilities from a mobile device. **Wayne Williams** shows you how

The idea of living in a high-tech home in which everything – including lighting, heating and security – can be controlled via your smartphone might seem like a futuristic fantasy. But while home automation was once the preserve of science fiction movies or only deemed possible for the mega-rich, today it's within everybody's reach. Transforming your house into a smarthome is not only easy to do, it won't break the bank, either. You can choose the elements you require, and introduce them as and when your budget will allow. Smarthome technology can often save you money on your bills, too, and could eventually pay for itself.



Turn your lights on before you get home

There are lots of smart lighting systems around, although Philips Hue personal wireless lighting (www.meethue.com) is one of the best known. The bulbs can display any colour in the visible spectrum and can be controlled directly from the web or an app on your mobile phone or tablet. IFTTT (ifttt.com) support means that you can set the system to switch on,

change colour or blink when a set action occurs, such as getting tagged on Facebook, receiving an email or your football team scoring a goal. A starter kit of three bulbs and a controller costs £179.95.

New to the Hue range is the Philips Hue Phoenix. This is a white ambient smart lamp that can deliver every shade

Philips Hue has a range of standalone lamps for its lighting system





of white light. There are table, wall and ceiling lights available, and they come priced from £39.99 (for a down light) to £299.99 (for a ceiling or pendant light).

Belkin sells smart LED bulbs as part of its WeMo range of home automation devices (bit.ly/wemo368), which can be turned on or off, dimmed and scheduled.

A single bulb costs £24.99, while a starter set (two bulbs and a WeMo Link) is £79.99. They are available in both screw and bayonet fittings.

Alternatively, there's the HalcyonPRO wireless lighting system (www.halcyon-lighting.co.uk)

Belkin's bulbs have networking built in so they can be controlled from a central hub

which uses behavioural, environmental and energy data (from HalcyonPRO sensors or 'Internet of Things'

devices) to intelligently deliver the right light at the right time. However, it's expensive – each bulb costs £78, and a Lighting Server is £120.

Arrive home to a warm house

The Nest Thermostat (nest.com/uk) learns how you like the heating in your home, and creates a personalised schedule, automatically turning the heat up when you or your family come home, and turning it down at night or when everyone has gone out. You can still override the schedule if you need to, and the thermostat will continue to learn from your actions. Most of the time you won't need to touch it – if you pop out



Nest's thermostats look great and can be operated by hand, or remotely using an app

for a pint and forget to adjust the heating, the Auto-Away function will spot you're not around and turn itself down. It costs £249 including installation.

Honeywell (www.honeywelluk.com/getconnected) also has connected thermostats that can be controlled with an app or, if you prefer, using your voice. The Voice Controlled Thermostat works exactly how you'd expect it to. Say "Hello Thermostat" to start it listening, then tell it what to do – "make it warmer", for example, or "make it two degrees



British Gas customers can use Hive to control heating and water through an app

cooler". The device costs from £229.

Your gas and electricity supplier may also offer smart products that you can use to control your heating. British Gas has Hive Active Heating (bit.ly/hiveheat368) which lets you control your heating and hot water remotely from your smartphone, tablet and laptop.



Honeywell has an alternative thermostat device you can control with your voice

Protect your property from intruders

Icontrol Networks (www.icontrol.com) recently launched its home security and automation device, Piper (getpiper.com) in the UK. Controlled via an Android or iOS app, the device displays a live 1080p HD stream of your home. It has 180-degree night vision and a motion and sound detector, so it can alert you when something out of the ordinary happens. It offers three customisable modes – home, away and vacation – and can alert you to security issues by phone call, text message, email or push notifications.



MINI WORKSHOP | Monitor your home while you're away

1 Install the mydlink Home app on your smartphone or tablet. The quick-install card in the product box has QR codes that take you to the relevant iOS or Android app. Launch the app and create a free account. Click the plus sign on the My Devices screen, then scan the QR code **1** situated on the back of the camera using the app.



2 Connect the power cable to the camera and plug it into a wall socket. Follow the instructions in the app. If your router supports Wi-Fi Protected Setup, press and hold the WPS button on the back of your camera **1** for three seconds. The blue light will blink. Press the WPS button on your router, and the connection should be made.

3 Complete the installation process (you can set things up manually if you run into problems). Set the time zone, and enter a password for the camera. You can also optionally add a nickname for your device. Select the camera and the image will appear. **1**



You can toggle sound on or off, **2** take a screenshot **3** and switch between auto, day and night modes. **4**

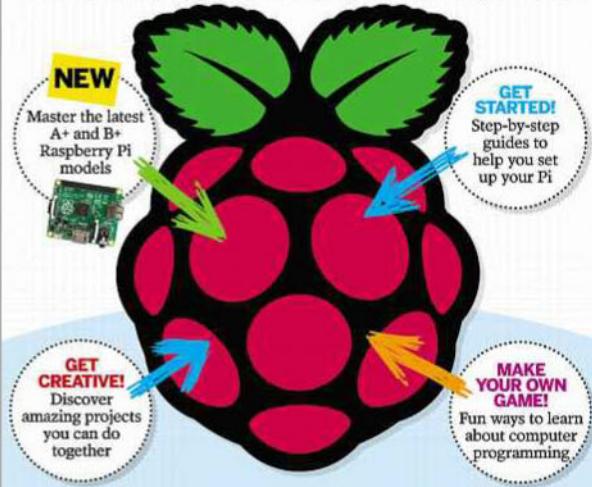
WebUser Bookstore

NEW!

Raspberry Pi for Kids

Updated for 2015

Your practical guide to the revolutionary £20 PC



RASPBERRY PI FOR KIDS

The Raspberry Pi is the incredible £20 British computer that's taking the world by storm. It's ideal for children of all ages to experiment, play games and learn valuable skills. We've updated this 148-page book for 2015 to include instructions on mastering the new Pi models (A+ and B+), helping children learn the coding skills needed to excel at the new school curriculum. We take you step by step through the basics of setting up and configuring the Pi and introduce many fun projects for families.

BUY IT NOW FROM AMAZON

[at bit.ly/raspbook](http://bit.ly/raspbook)
(cheaper than in the shops!)

THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO GOOGLE HIDDEN TOOLS

Inside the 164-page *The Definitive Guide to Google Hidden Tools*, we lift the lid on Google's most popular tools to reveal more than 430 ways to make them even more efficient, useful and tailored to your needs. These include clever new add-ons for Chrome, amazing free apps for Android and stunning sights in Google Maps.



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THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO ANDROID

Inside this 148-page book you'll find all the free apps, expert tips and easy-to-follow Workshops you need to get the most out of your phone or tablet. You'll find buying advice, including reviews of the latest tablets and phones, and everything you need to know about taking your first steps with your new device.



BUY IT NOW FROM AMAZON
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(cheaper than in the shops!)



Piper cameras have hardware motion and sound detectors built-in

You can have up to five Pipers in your home. There's a range of accessories available, too, including home-automation devices that let you control lights and appliances remotely,

scheduling them to go off at a set time or based on environmental factors such as changes in light levels or when you open your front door.

There's also a built-in 105-decibel siren that can be set to go off if motion or sound is detected while you are away. You can trigger this siren yourself by hitting the panic button. Piper is priced at £217 and can be purchased directly from getpiper.com.

D-Link has a large selection of Smart Home

D-Link has a range of interconnected devices to make your home smarter, including security cameras



solutions (bit.ly/mydlink368), including security products such as the mydlink Home Monitor HD (£92) and the mydlink Home Wi-Fi Motion Sensor (£37). The latter alerts you when motion is detected in your home, and also works in conjunction with other mydlink Home smart devices, including the Home Monitor HD.

If you have a spare or underused Apple device, you can turn it into a DIY video home security system using the free Manything app (manything.com). Once it's installed, you can start live streaming from your home and watch the video via the app on your phone or from the web. It can also send alerts when it detects motion. We show you how to get started with mydlink in the Mini Workshop on page 59.

Switch any device on or off

The WiSPP Smart Point Plug (www.wispp.co.uk) is a plug that you can control from an iPhone, iPad or Android device. Anything you plug into it - lights, heaters, security cameras and so on - can be turned on or off via an app, and you can install up to 150 WiSPP devices around the home. Expect to pay around



Belkin WeMo and WiSPP have socket-based smart devices you can use to control any device plugged into them

£20 for each one. We show you how to set it up in the Mini Workshop, below.

D-Link also sells mydlink Home Smart Plugs (bit.ly/mydlink368) that let you monitor and control your home's electronic appliances from anywhere. You can monitor energy usage of connected appliances, create on/off schedules and set up alerts. The devices also prevent connected items from overheating via a useful built-in thermal sensor. These cost around £43.50 each.

Belkin has similar WeMo Switch (£39.99) and Insight Switch (£49.99) plugs (bit.ly/wemo368) which work in the same way. The Insight Switch has extra options that monitor your connected items and send information about their energy usage directly to your smartphone or tablet. ■



MINI WORKSHOP | Turn any device on or off while you're out



1 Setting up a WiSPP Smart Point Plug is surprisingly simple. Plug it into a wall socket and then download the free SmartPoint app for Android or iOS. Enter your network SSD and password, **1** then tap Setup New Socket. **2** The light on the plug should be flashing red while you do this.

2 The connection process might take up to a minute to complete, and we've found that standing quite close to the plug helps. Once the connection is made, tap the Back button. Attach an electrical item to the socket. You can turn it on or off using the big button. **1** It will go blue when it's on.



3 The Rules button **1** lets you set a schedule for when the plug turns on or off. If you have multiple plugs, you can set rules for each one. You can also set a countdown timer. The Customise button **2** lets you hide the plug from other people on your network, or remove it.



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How To... code like a professional

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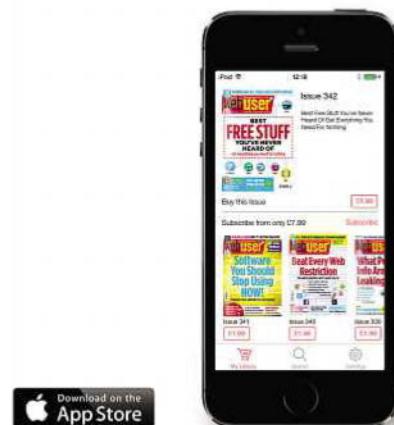
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Web User's Top Tips

Our experts show you how to prepare your Android phone or tablet for its next update

TOP TIPS TO PREPARE FOR ANDROID UPDATES

Check if updates are available

Your Android device should be set to automatically check for updates at scheduled intervals and will notify you when one (such as the recent upgrade to Android 5.0 Lollipop) is available. You can also manually check for updates at any time. Pull down from the top and tap the gear icon to go to Settings. Find and tap About Device (it's on the More tab on some Samsung phones), to display the current Android version. Tap 'Software updates', then Update. This will check for any new Android update and ask if you want to download and install it. However, read the rest of our tips before you start installing the update because there are some important steps you should take first.



Will my device be updated?

The Android OS is only available via your phone and tablet, which means that any updates will come from your device's manufacturer and not directly from Google. If a manufacturer is slow to pass on an update or decides not to do so at

Android 5.0
System
Update

all, there is nothing you can do about it.

Top-of-the-range devices are eventually updated with the latest version of Android, but budget models may never receive an update. The best way to find out if and when a phone or tablet will be updated is to search for it on Google. Updates are released around the world one region at a time. You can find out when the update is rolled out somewhere else in the world and deduce that sooner or later it will come to your device, too.

Devices in the Google Nexus range are always updated first and within a week or two of the latest version being released. So, if you want to be at the cutting edge of Android, make your next device a Nexus.

If you see words that look like they've been typed in a typewriter, follow the instructions and type them exactly as they appear, paying close attention to spaces and punctuation.

data loss during updates. Go to Settings and find Accounts. Tap Google and tap your account. The boxes to select the items you want backed up should all be ticked, including app data, calendar, contacts, Chrome, music, Google+ photos and so on.

Other accounts may also have back-up facilities. If you have a Samsung device, for example, tap Samsung in the account list. Make sure 'Auto backup' is turned on and all the items are ticked. There is a 'Back up now' button to save everything and it's a good idea to do this before an update.

Don't run out of power

Updates can take anywhere from 10 minutes to an hour, and they use a lot of power. Your device may refuse to update if it has less than 50 per cent of its battery charge left, so you should plug the device into the mains power before it starts updating.

Only download on Wi-Fi

Some Android updates are large and the download can be hundreds of megabytes in size. To avoid using up your data allowance and incurring charges on your mobile phone, you should restrict updates to 'Wi-Fi only', which has unlimited data. To do this, go to Settings and find 'About device' (you'll find it on the More tab on Samsung phones). Tap 'Software update', then tick the box next to 'Wi-Fi only'.



Back up with Google

If you have an Android device, you will also have a Google account, which means your photos, files, contacts, email and documents can be backed up online. It is essential to have a backup so you're protected against any possible



Check the storage

You need space to download an update and even more space to install it. To see how much free space there is on your device, go to Settings and find Storage (it's on the More tab on Samsung devices). The space on your device will be broken down by usage, such as apps, audio, downloads, pictures, videos and so on. Make sure you have at least a couple of gigabytes free for the update.

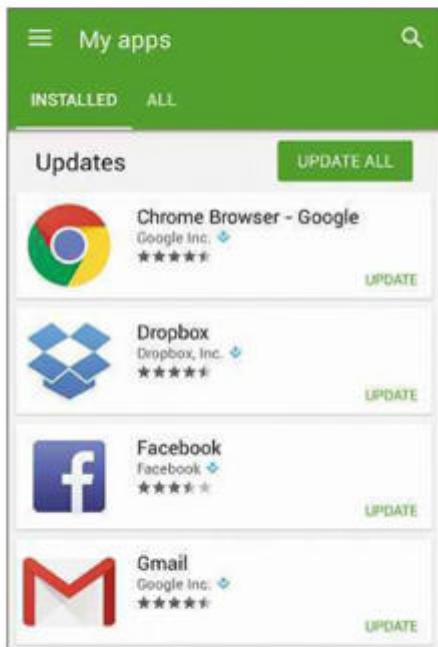
If you need to free up space, upload photos and videos to Google Drive, Dropbox, OneDrive and other online drives, then delete them on your phone or tablet. Large apps can be uninstalled, then reinstalled later.



Check that you've got enough space to download and install updates

Get your apps up to date

Before installing a new version of Android, update all your apps in case the old ones have compatibility problems with the new operating system. Open the Play Store, tap the menu button in the top-left corner, press 'My apps' and then 'Update all'.



Apps are often updated to be compatible with new OS versions, so update them first

TAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

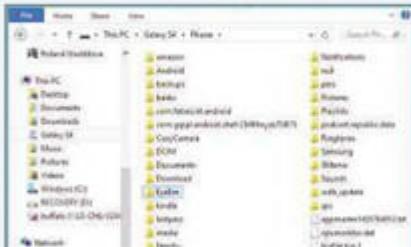
More advanced tips for when you're feeling brave

Get an unofficial update

If you can't wait for an official Android update from the manufacturer, there are other ways to get it. CyanogenMod (www.cyanogenmod.org) is an alternative version of Android built by enthusiasts and based on Android 5.0. Go to the Wiki section of the website, click the Devices icon, then click the 'show all devices' link to see if yours is listed. If it is, click the Get Started button on the CyanogenMod homepage for instructions on how to install it. Doing this will invalidate the warranty on a new phone, so it's best used on older devices where the guarantee has expired and the manufacturer is unlikely to ever provide an update. However, it's always wise to proceed with caution.

Make a manual backup

You can manually back up before downloading and installing updates by connecting the phone or tablet to the PC using a USB cable. A new icon appears in Explorer when Computer or This PC is selected. Double-clicking it displays all the files and folders on the device. Drag and drop them into a folder on the PC's hard drive to make a copy.



Plug your device into the computer and copy the folders to make a full backup

Fix update problems

The latest version of Android (5.0 Lollipop) does not work well on old devices that have limited performance, and certain apps and tools can stop working. Of the many possible solutions, the simplest is a reboot. Hold down the power button and turn the device off. Restart it and you may find that the clean boot has helped fix a range of problems.

Running lots of background apps makes Android 5.0 run slowly, so uninstall any app you have not used in the last month. Go to Settings, Apps or 'Application manager' and select an app. Press the following buttons in

SD CARD	RUNNING	ALL
OneDrive	1.1MB 1 process and 5 services	99:16:42
kindle	Amazon Kindle 1 process and 1 service	40:50:25
Facebook	59MB 1 process and 1 service	89:15:46
Outlook	17MB 1 process and 2 services	77:38:19
Evernote	13MB 1 process and 1 service	98:51:30

Stop running unnecessary programs to boost performance

this order: 'Force stop'; 'Clear cache'; 'Clear data'; 'Uninstall'.

You should stop apps running in the background to restore lost performance after an upgrade. Go to Settings, Apps or 'Application manager' and swipe left to view the running apps. Tap an app that does not need to be running and press the Stop button. Music apps are a good example, since they don't do anything other than take up memory when they're not in use. Don't stop anything that you don't recognise; only stop apps with obvious functions that you are not using.

Freshen up with a factory reset

Android phones and tablets benefit greatly from a factory reset. Afterwards, they run faster, have more storage space, more memory for running apps and exhibit fewer problems. It can breathe life into a slow and buggy device, so if there are problems after an update, or if you simply want to refresh and invigorate your phone or tablet, reset it.

Make sure it is backed up using the methods we've described. You'll have no problems with a factory reset because everything can be restored later. Go to Settings and find 'Backup and reset' (on the Accounts tab on some phones). Tap 'Factory data reset' and then 'Reset device'. It will shut down and restart. Log into your Google account and it will prompt you to select the apps you want to restore. Choose those that are necessary. When the home screen appears, the device will be much improved.

Ask the Expert

Roland Waddilove, computer programmer and PC journalist since 1981, answers all your technical questions. Email us for help at webuser@dennis.co.uk



WINDOWS 10

Upgrading to Windows 10

Q If I upgrade from Windows 8.1 to 10, will it affect my existing files, programs and settings? Can I buy the upgrade on a DVD? This would make it easier to install on a computer with a slow internet connection, rather than having to download the operating system, and would be useful for resolving any future problems that need a system disc.

Keith Burr, via email

A Microsoft usually releases new versions of Windows in the Autumn, around October, so the situation might change, but for now it's said that Windows 10 will be a free upgrade for Windows 7 and 8 users, but they must be connected to the internet and have Windows Update enabled. As with Windows 8 and 8.1, 10 will be a download from the Microsoft website or Windows Store, but a DVD will also be available to buy.

However, you can refresh and reset



Windows 10 is a free upgrade, but you will have to download it

Windows to fix most problems and, in the event of a disaster, a backup program that stores an image of your hard drive on an external drive can restore everything with much less effort than a DVD. There are several free backup programs that do this, such as SyncBackFree (bit.ly/sync368), which won our free backup Gold Award in Issue 366 (bit.ly/webuser366).

If you're running 32-bit Windows 8 and upgrade to 32-bit Windows 10, all your files, programs and settings will be kept; but if you upgrade from 32-bit to 64-bit, everything will be erased. Either way, you should create a backup before you start.

HARDWARE

A new monitor for an old PC

Q I am thinking of changing my 19in monitor for a Dell Ultra Sharp U2414H IPS. My Dell Dimension 9150 PC is running Windows XP Pro. How easy it is to install a new monitor? I've been told that I don't need to use the monitor's driver, but it all seems so confusing.

Andrew, via email

A The monitor needs no extra software and you simply plug it into your PC. However, you have a very old computer running an even older operating system, which could cause problems.

Your Dell PC's video card has only DVI and VGA connectors, so you'll need adaptors to convert them to HDMI, which is what the new monitor uses.

Also, your old video card might not be capable of displaying graphics at the monitor's native resolution of 1,920 x 1,080 pixels. Even if it can, the extra resources this uses might slow down your PC.

The Dell Ultra Sharp, along with the necessary cables and adapters, will cost you over £200. It might be better to spend this money on a new computer instead. If you carry on as you are for a few more months, you could save up some money and get a brand new Windows 10 computer this autumn. It will be much better than your Dell Dimension 9150, which we guess must be at least eight years old and is running a 14-year-old operating system that is no longer supported by Microsoft. A new PC will also come bundled with a much better monitor.

SECURITY

Restore security after a ransom virus

Q My PC was recently infected with a ransom virus. I used Malwarebytes to get rid of it, but I now find that my Avast anti-virus software has been disabled. If I try to start it manually, I get a message saying "This program is blocked by group policy. For more information contact your system administrator".

Is there anything I can do to get Avast running again? Clearly it was disabled as part of the process that installed the virus, but uninstalling and reinstalling it doesn't fix the problem, so I'm a bit stuck as to what to do next.

Jeff Hannay, via email

A You can stop programs running by adding a setting to the Registry. Many companies, schools and libraries use this method to control what can be run on a public computer, but viruses can use the same technique to block your anti-virus software and stop it from cleaning your PC.

To change these Registry settings, follow the instructions below in Normal Mode. If that doesn't work, try it in Safe Mode (press the F8 key a few seconds after switching on your PC and select Safe Mode from the menu).

Press Windows+R, type **regedit** and press Enter to start the Registry Editor. In the left-hand pane, go to:

HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Policies

There should be no values apart from Default for this key and any subkeys (the subfolders below it). Right-click any



Programs that are blocked appear in the Policies section of the Registry



other values and select Delete on the menu. Non-Microsoft subkeys can also be deleted. The same goes for:

HKEY_CURRENT_USER\System\CurrentControlSet\Policies

Now go to:

HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Policies\Microsoft\Windows

There should only be one Default value on the right for this key and any subkeys. Delete all other values.

Before changing anything in the Registry, always right-click the key on the left and select Export. Make sure Selected Branch is chosen and save the file. This is an Undo file and clicking it undoes any changes you make, just in case something goes wrong.

SECURITY

Don't pay £450 to remove UniDeals

Q For years, I've protected my PC with BullGuard without any problems. I recently installed Panda Global Protection and, ever since, I've been inundated with annoying ads from UniDeals, together with a pop-up warning from Panda that "yaa.blfyuefyset.com is trying to access the internet and has been blocked".

I contacted Panda's helpline and let its tech-support person remotely control my PC. After an extensive scan, he said my IP address had been compromised by Trojans and I may now be compromising anyone I contact by email. I assumed the two browsers on my PC, Firefox and IE, shared the same IP address, yet only Firefox appears to be affected.

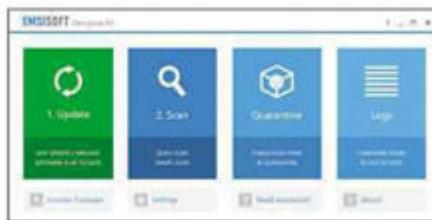
The end result was that an engineer would be calling me to carry out a remote procedure on my PC which would take around two to three hours and cost £449.50. Is a procedure of this magnitude necessary, and did changing my security provider cause this to happen?

Panda's tech-support person also said that McAfee Security Scan Plus (which I have never used) and Malwarebytes Anti-Malware (which I only run occasionally) are interfering with Panda and are exacerbating the problem. Is this likely, since they only scan for malware that is already on the PC rather than constantly checking for viruses?

Bryan Darby, via email

A Your conversation with Panda seems odd. Are you sure you were talking to Panda and not someone else – perhaps the company that sold you the software? Don't ring them back, just follow our instructions instead.

UniDeals is often bundled with free



To avoid security software conflicts, use an on-demand scanner

software and is frequently installed accidentally. It changes your browser's search engine and displays adverts, but is a PUP (Potentially Unwanted Program) rather than a virus, so anti-virus programs won't block it. Your switch from BullGuard to Panda is not why it's ended up on your PC.

Go to the Control Panel and open 'Programs and Features', then look for any item with 'UniDeals' in the name and uninstall it. Better still, use a tool such as IObit Uninstaller (www.iobit.com). Open Internet Options in the Control Panel and, on the General tab, replace whatever is in the 'Home page' box with your startup page, such as <http://www.google.co.uk>. Click the Tabs button, find 'When a new tab is opened, open' and select 'A blank page'. Click the OK buttons to close the windows.

Open Internet Explorer, click the gear icon and select Manage Add-ons. Select Search Providers, choose the one you want, such as Google, and click 'Set as default'. Select the others and click Remove. Select 'Toolbars and Extensions', then All Add-ons below and check the list of items on the right for anything with 'UniDeals' in the name or publisher columns. Select and Disable any you find.

HARDWARE

Can't format USB drive

Q I tried to format a USB memory drive and got the message: "This disc is write protected". What should I do to fix this?

Joe Pester, via email

A Some flash memory drives have a small switch that controls whether they are write protected. If yours does not, it may need partitioning before it can be formatted. Go to the Control Panel and click Administrative Tools. Double-click Computer Management and select Disk Management under

Start Firefox, click the menu button and select Add-ons, then Extensions on the left. Click the Remove button against any toolbars and add-ons you don't want, such as 'UniDeals'. Close the add-ons tab, go to the menu and select Options. Select the General icon and enter a homepage, such as www.google.co.uk. Select the Search icon and choose a search engine. Select any in the list you don't want and click the Remove button.

Don't install more than one security program with real-time protection. It doesn't make the PC more secure, but slows it down and may cause other problems. However, you can use a tool such as Emsisoft Emergency Kit (www.emsisoft.com), which only scans your hard drive when you choose to run it.

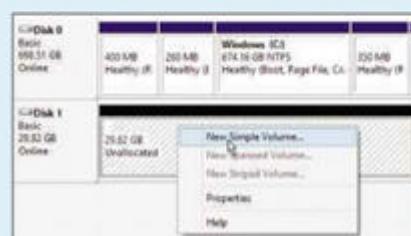
GENERAL PC

Fix Run DLL issues

Q When I start Windows 7 on my PC, a Run DLL error appears saying: "There is a problem starting C:/PROG -1/System/SyMenu.DLL, the specified module could not be found". Can I remove and delete this program?

Tim Beveridge, via email

A SyMenu.DLL may be a component of SyMenu (www.ugmfree.it), which is a free Start menu replacement and tool for portable programs. You must have deleted it, but left a Registry entry that is making Windows try to load it every time it starts. Autoruns (bit.ly/runs368), which we looked at last issue, can fix this. Run it and enter SyMenu in the filter box, then disable SyMenu entries by clearing their tick boxes.



To prepare a drive, create a volume, then format it afterwards

Storage. Right-click the USB memory drive and select Delete Volume until it says the whole device is unallocated. Right-click it and select 'New simple volume'. Keep clicking the Next button until the process has finished. The drive is now ready to use and can be accessed from Explorer.



This fortnight, Roland has been researching SEO techniques but he still can't get his website on to Google's first page

Your Top Tips

Our pick of the best advice from our readers. To get help or offer it to others, visit forum.webuser.co.uk

TOP TIP

GENERAL PC

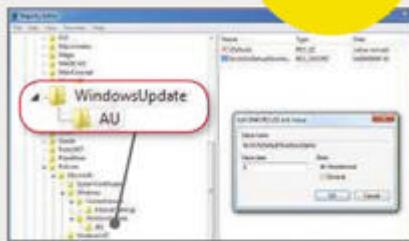
Stop auto-updates

When updates are downloaded for Windows, they're saved to your hard drive and automatically installed the next time you shut down or restart your PC. In Windows 7, the 'Shut down' option on the Start menu is changed so that it auto-installs the updates. This can be annoying if you want to switch off quickly, because the PC can spend the next 20 minutes installing a huge update. It is even more annoying if you meant to put a laptop into sleep mode and it reboots and starts installing updates instead.

To stop this happening and put off updates until a more convenient time, press Windows+R, type `regedit`, then press Enter to open the Registry Editor. Go to:

`HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Policies\Microsoft\Windows`

Right-click it and select New, Key. Name it `WindowsUpdate`, right-click it and select New, Key. Call it `AU`. You



A quick Registry tweak can stop your shutdown button updating automatically

should now be at:

`HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Policies\Microsoft\Windows\WindowsUpdate\AU`

Right-click in the right-hand pane and select New, DWORD Value. Name it `NoAUAsDefaultShutdownOption` then double-click it and enter the number '1' for the value.

Close the Registry Editor and 'Shutdown' on the start menu will no longer automatically install updates. Click the little arrow to the right of 'Shutdown' to see a new menu item, 'Install updates and shut down'. You can select this when you want to update.

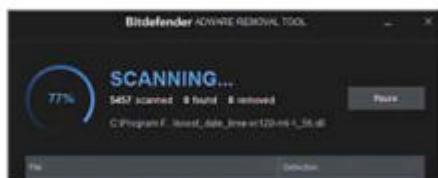
Paul Best, via email

SECURITY

Remove adware on the go

I collect virus-, adware- and spyware-removal tools on a USB memory drive. This is partly for my own benefit, in case my computer is ever infected, and partly for when friends and relatives ask for help with their computers, because I'm the one they always ask to fix them when they go wrong.

The latest addition to my toolkit is Bitdefender Adware Removal Tool for PC (bit.ly/bitdef368). It's free, it doesn't



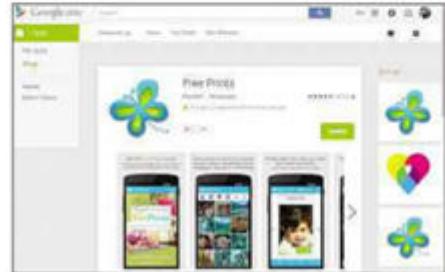
Bitdefender's free tool will remove adware from your Windows computer

**£25
winner**



postage, so I have already placed my first order.

kingfisher171, Web User Forums



Free Prints lets you order up to 45 free 6 x 4in prints per month

INTERNET

Switch DNS servers

Word-based website addresses such as google.com are for humans; computers actually use IP addresses, which consist of a series of four numbers, such as 216.58.208.46. You can type these numbers into the address box of your browser for an alternative route to Google's search engine.

A DNS server is used by the browser to turn word-based addresses into IP numbers; the faster it works, the quicker you get to your websites. Switching from your current DNS to a different one

might help speed up your browsing.

Some DNS servers add extra tools that can protect you from malware, dodgy downloads and unsuitable websites.

Press Windows+R, type `ncpa.cpl`, then press Enter. Right-click WiFi or Ethernet, depending on which one you use to connect to the



Switch to a faster or more secure DNS by entering the new server's IP addresses



internet, and click Properties. In the next window, double-click Internet Protocol Version 4. Switch from 'Obtain DNS server addresses automatically' to 'Use the following DNS server addresses'. Note that you can switch back to your current default any time you like. Enter 8.8.8.8 and 8.8.4.4 to use Google's fast DNS servers; 156.154.70.1 and 156.154.71.1 to use Neustar's faster, safer DNS (see bit.ly/neustar368 for more information); or 8.26.56.26 and 8.20.247.20 to use Comodo's for extra security (bit.ly/comodo368).

Alan Henderson, via email

INTERNET

Check if a website is down

I recently came across a handy website that lets you check the status of other sites in real time to see if they are down or not. It's called Websitedown.info (www.websitedown.info) and could save you a lot of angst the next time your browser fails to load a web page. To perform a query, simply enter a domain name into the search bar at the top of the page and click Check to see if it is down for other users right now.

Doublell, Web User Forums



Websitedown.info lets you check if a website is down for everyone or just you

EMAIL

Get pop-up alerts for Yahoo Mail

I recently discovered a Chrome extension called Mail Notifier (bit.ly/yahoo368) that helps to manage my Yahoo Mail account. When a new message is received, I get an alert in a pop-up box in the lower right-hand side of the screen. I can click it to view the email or delete it immediately. In addition, the extension shows notifications and provides quick access to my inbox. You can get similar extensions for Firefox (bit.ly/firefox368) and Opera (bit.ly/oper368), too.

Fratpark and Madeline, Web User Forums

MOBILE

Manage apps that use Facebook login

I'm forever logging into apps on my phone and tablet using Facebook, but it's not at all obvious where to manage them



Facebook's Privacy Check-up tool shows the apps you've logged into via Facebook

on the social network. Indeed, it was only by chance that I discovered you can find a comprehensive list of all the apps you've logged into using Facebook by clicking the padlock icon on its top menu and selecting 'Privacy Check-up'. After confirming your privacy settings for content you post to the social network, it shows a list of all the apps you've ever logged into. By clicking the drop-down arrow, you can change an app's visibility on Facebook, or you can delete it altogether by clicking the X button. I was shocked by how many apps I didn't even recognise, so I've had a good clear out!

Tom Collins, via email

VIDEO

Upload longer videos to YouTube

I didn't realise until recently that all YouTube users can upload videos over 15 minutes in length by simply verifying their account. This is really handy if you've put together a long edit from a holiday or something similar, and want to be able to share it with your friends and family.

To verify your account, open the video upload page at bit.ly/youtube368 and click the 'Increase your limit' link. You can then choose between receiving a verification code via text message or an automated phone call. Once you've entered the code, you'll be able to upload videos up to 11 hours in length and 128GB in size! You can also enable any rejected videos you uploaded before verifying the account by selecting 'Activate this video' in your Video Manager.

Tony, via email

SOFTWARE

Reinstall Adobe Flash Player

A couple of days ago, I found that a version of Adobe's Flash Player hadn't uninstalled properly - the new version was on my PC, but part of the old one still remained. A quick Google search brought me to this helpful thread on the Adobe Flash Player forum (bit.ly/adobe368), which gives excellent, easy-

to-follow instructions on how to perform a clean installation of the program. There's also a helpful video.

Because I'd already partly uninstalled the old version via 'Programs and Features', I only needed to follow steps 4 and 5 in the instructions. I then reinstalled the new versions I'd downloaded and Flash Player is now up to date.

Madeline, Web User Forums

SECURITY

Convert AVG from Premium to Free

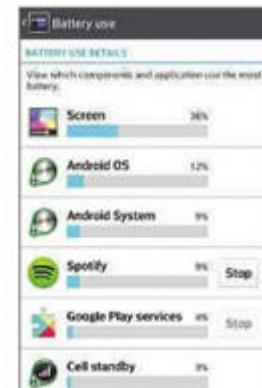
If you installed the trial version of AVG Antivirus 2015 Premium by accident and want to downgrade to the free version, go into the program removal section of Control Panel, choose AVG and select Uninstall. The program will give you a prompt asking if you want to install AVG 2015 Free instead, so click Yes and it will begin the installation process, which takes no more than a minute.

Bedstor, Web User Forums

ANDROID

Improve your Android device's battery life

Last week, my phone started to run really slowly and I noticed that its battery was draining much faster than usual. Using Android's 'Battery use' tool, I identified that Facebook was responsible for using a disproportionately large amount of my battery power. I decided to delete the app (since it's also possible to access Facebook from my browser) and noticed a marked improvement in performance and battery life.



Android's 'Battery use' menu shows battery hogs on your device

could be running in the background and causing my device to run less efficiently. I therefore systematically went through my app lists and deleted anything that I don't regularly use. This cleared a lot of space and now the battery life is better than it's been for months. I imagine resetting the phone to factory settings would make it run like new, but if you can't justify doing that, a spring clean might just do the trick!

Ed Wright, via email



Readers' Helpdesk

Our pick of the best solutions posted on our reader forums. Visit forum.webuser.co.uk – it's friendly and free!

HARDWARE

Can I connect my laptop's hard drive to a caddy?

Q I have a laptop hard drive that says it uses a SATA interface, but the connector doesn't resemble the usual SATA connector (see picture). I'm aware that the connections on laptop hard drives can vary from those on desktop PCs, but can anyone tell me if I'll be able to mount the hard drive in a caddy?

volts, Web User Forums

A Your hard drive resembles the one at bit.ly/harddrive368, so you should try removing the connector's front to see if you can expose the standard SATA connector. SATA is an international standard that can't just be changed at will, so you should be able to use it in a caddy once you've done this.

succulent95 and alanrwood, Web User Forums



Some laptops use an adapter to connect SATA hard drives to the motherboard

GENERAL PC

Why won't my monitor display my Desktop correctly?

Q I have just connected a monitor to my laptop and have a picture on both. However, the picture on the monitor is partially cut off on the left side with an unused space on the right. Is there a way to align the screen to its correct position?

fossewayfella, Web User Forums

A It's possible your PC is set to mirror your main display on the external monitor, which could cause the Desktop to become distorted on both. This is because the graphics card chooses a

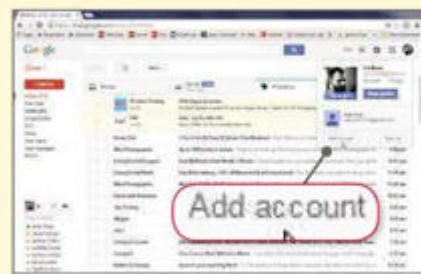
EMAIL

How can I use two Gmail accounts simultaneously?

Q I have set up two new Gmail accounts for family members, but if I bookmark one of the accounts, the link always loads the last account that I logged into, regardless of which one I bookmarked. I would like to be able to open either account with a single click, without having to sign in each time. Is there a way round this or will I have to use Microsoft Outlook?

Dave1510, Web User Forums

A If you select your profile picture from the top-right corner of Gmail and click 'Add account', you can sign into multiple accounts simultaneously without having to re-enter your details each time you want to switch between them. There's a Gmail support page at bit.ly/gmail368 with more information on this. While this is definitely the best solution, you could also use different



Gmail lets you switch between accounts at the click of a button

browsers for each account if you want another way to keep them both open at once. Chrome also has a new feature that lets you sign into a different user account in a new browser window. To switch accounts, select your name next to the minimise and maximise buttons and choose 'Switch person'.

Moonshine and izzit, Web User Forums

single resolution that works for both displays, but isn't necessarily ideal for either. Unless you need to use this option, you should choose to extend your displays or show the Desktop only on your external display, depending on which suits your needs better.

To change these settings, right-click the Desktop and select Screen Resolution. Here, you can click the drop-down menu to choose from the

'Multiple displays' options. On Windows 8.1, you'll need to right-click the Desktop, choose Personalize, Display and 'Change display settings'. If you're still having problems, you could try altering your monitor's settings using its built-in interface. There should be an auto-adjustment option, but if not, look for a menu that lets you change the vertical and horizontal position of the image.

succulent95, Web User Forums

HARDWARE

How do I fix a runtime error?

Q I keep getting the following message when I start up my PC: "Runtime Error Program:\Windows\System32\nvsvc.exe." Does anyone know what I have to do to fix it please?

Suttyjosie, Web User Forums



Windows lets you extend or mirror your Desktop image on an external display

A This error is related to your Nvidia graphics card, so I'd recommend installing the latest Nvidia drivers for it.



As a workaround, you could also open Services.msc, find Nvidia Driver Helper Service and change its 'Startup type' from Automatic to Manual or Disabled. You might also need to set Nvidia Stereoscopic 3D to Disabled, if you want to resolve the problem without reinstalling your graphics drivers.

Stewart40 and Cantrel, Web User Forums

GENERAL PC

Why does the light stay on after I turn off my laptop?

I am setting up a new Toshiba laptop with Windows 7 and have noticed that when I shut it down, there is a light – the first of three lights at the front – that always stays on. I can't find anything about it in the instructions, but I hope it doesn't mean the laptop is still in standby. Does anyone know if the light should stay on when the laptop is shut down?

Lolalola, Web User Forums

Once a PC is switched off, it's off. If it's still plugged into the mains, one of the lights will often change colour to show that the battery is being charged. Try unplugging it from the mains to see if the light goes out. Be patient, though, as the capacitors might stop this from happening instantly. On my laptop, even after shutdown, a light shows its charged state: green for fully charged and red when it's charging.

izzit and Cantrel, Web User Forums

APPS

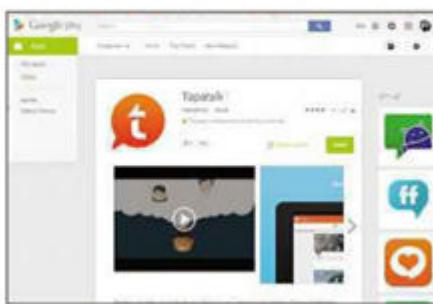
Can I access the Web User Forums from Tapatalk?

Does anyone know about Tapatalk (tapatalk.com)? On one of the forums I use, I noticed that quite a number of people's posts end with 'sent from my iPad using Tapatalk'. I looked up the app up and it seems that it lets you access all the forums you use from one central place, so you don't have to open or close new windows constantly. However, when I joined and searched for the Web User forum, it wasn't there. Am I to assume that I did something wrong or does Web User have to subscribe to Tapatalk before I can find it?

kingfisher171, Web User Forums

The forum needs to have a Tapatalk plug-in or script installed for the app to work with it. Unfortunately, the Web User forum doesn't support the app, so if you don't frequent many other Tapatalk-compatible forums, then you probably won't gain much from it.

I regularly use three work-related forums that support Tapatalk, which



Tapatalk is not compatible with all web forums

makes using them really easy. I just wish more of my regular forums supported the Tapatalk app.

TheTechGuy, Web User Forums

SOFTWARE

What's the best free photo-editing software?

I'm looking for a simple, free photo-editing program. I know of various applications, but I'm not sure which one best fits my criteria. I don't want it to do much – perhaps get rid of red eye and date stamps – but anything more than that will probably confuse me. Does anyone have any thoughts or recommendations please?

Madeline, Web User Forums

You can crop the date off a picture using almost any photo editor and most of them will also perform red-eye removal. I've just been exploring Zoner Photo Studio (free.zoner.com) and there's a handy tool in its Editor mode that lets you choose between red-eye removal, white-eye removal and brush removal (which lets you select the new eye colour). If you decide to download it, there's a user guide at bit.ly/zoner368, which contains instructions for red-eye removal.

If you're only editing single photos,

SOFTWARE

Can I run Android apps on my PC?

I recently read about using Android apps on a PC, but I can't find the article now to check the name of the software I need. I have tried searching online but all the results I found looked quite dodgy! Can anyone suggest which program I might be after?

Fratpark, Web User Forums

I think it must have been the Bluestacks app player (bit.ly/bluestacks368). There's a handy

Paint.NET (www.getpaint.net) is an excellent program and there are plenty of plug-ins available from its forum to make it even better.

If you value simplicity above all else, then try Windows Photo Gallery, which is probably already installed on your PC or is otherwise available via the Essentials download at bit.ly/photogallery368. You can remove red eye by selecting the appropriate tool and zooming in to accurately target the red areas. Removing the date stamp can be achieved in a similar way by clicking Retouch, then selecting the area you want to be removed. If you're unhappy with the changes, you can always click 'Revert to original' to undo your actions.

Stewart40, Space_Cowby, seanoc, jak and Moonshine, Web User Forums

SECURITY

Do I need anti-virus add-ons for all my browsers?

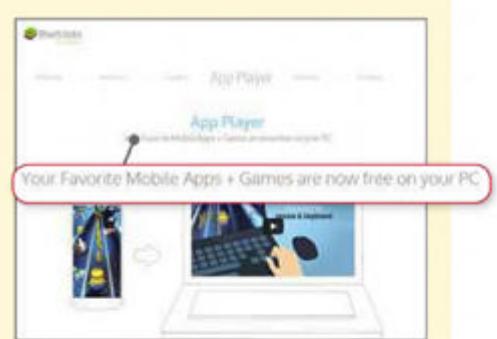
I have noticed that not all my browsers show add-ons for my anti-virus software. Should I be concerned about this?

Sirch345, Web User Forums

No, there's nothing to worry about. It can be reassuring to have a browser add-on, but any anti-virus with real-time protection will be protecting you. I've used both Avast and Norton without add-ons and they've managed to block any viruses I've encountered while browsing. Avast also seems to check certificates without an active add-on.

Remember, most browsers have built-in anti-phishing tools. Norton offers a toolbar for popular browsers, including Firefox and Internet Explorer, but I don't use them and I don't feel that I'm more at risk without them.

succulent95 and Madeline, Web User



Bluestacks lets you run Android apps on your PC

how-to guide on using Bluestacks on Tom's Guide at bit.ly/guide368.

ezyduzzit, Web User Forums

Star Email

eBay should stop favouring timewasters

I certainly agree with what Barry Collins says about time-wasting eBay bidders (Page 404, Issue 366, bit.ly/webuser366). I have experienced the same thing myself, with people who bid and win items, then don't complete the purchase.

At one time, it was possible to leave negative feedback about those who didn't pay, but now it has turned too much in favour of the buyer. Once I had a buyer who didn't pay, so I looked at his feedback and found quite a number of negative comments from sellers. But eBay doesn't let you do this now. Many bidders don't read the item description or location, then after the auction has finished, they say they have bid in error.

I have had buyers lie about the



things that I sell, such as saying there were missing items or that they were damaged in the post, but they don't keep the packaging to show me. One girl claimed I had sold her a damaged plant in a yoghurt pot! I later noticed that she had mixed me up with another seller, for whom she had left positive feedback.

My son recently sold an item for £13, which he described as 'used' because it had been used once. The buyer left negative feedback and opened a 'dispute' with my son as soon as he received the item. He then relisted it on eBay, with the price starting at £20! After eBay refunded him his money from the original sale, he kept the proceeds from the new sale as well. Fortunately, my son managed to get his money back.

But it's not all bad news. Recently, I had some coins to sell, and it all went well. I sold them in lots of around £50, used the 'Royal Mail second class signed for' option and everyone paid up promptly, with all the coins reaching their destinations.

Keith Rider, via email

Anonymous raises questions about freedom of speech

Regarding your Instant Expert in Issue 366 about Anonymous: who are we at war with? Over the last 10 years, a huge number of companies and individuals have been affected by cyberterrorism. When an organisation such as Anonymous hacks customers' details and places the data on the net, the big businesses that were hacked get a lot of adverse publicity and governments tell us that these sorts of attacks will kill businesses and could topple governments.

Are we to trust these people only because they are now targeting our enemies, who are in the news and are killing innocent people? That old saying comes to mind that the enemy of my enemy is my friend. After the war, do we go back to our original ways?

Who else is in this war, and who else is watching? We know that most countries have their own equivalent of MI5, but does the average person who buys a laptop, iPad or phone really know what's in the software and who is using it to spy on them? The British government has already had bad publicity for handing secrets over to allied countries, so what's next? Are we really being spied on and



listened to, now that our cameras and microphones can be switched on remotely?

If Anonymous does bring down terrorism, does that mean they will not be charged? Or will they be rewarded with work, payment and medals? No sane person would agree to the murders and monstrous killings that have recently been in the news, but it does seem that with the invention of computers we are making this world an open platform for anyone who wishes to pursue their own agenda, and policing it is proving more and more difficult each day.

This is a high price to pay for freedom of speech.

Terry Bradley, Milton Keynes

Google's secret reason for limited storage

I refer to the email 'Android is as deceptive about storage as Apple' in Inbox, Issue 365 (bit.ly/webuser365). Ewan Sykes omits the real reason why only tiny amounts of storage are available on Android tablets, which is that Google wants to force you to store everything from your Android device on its own servers. Why? So that Google can mine your photos, videos, MP3s, emails and other files for data that it can sell to its cretinous advertisers. In my opinion, this is exactly the same reason why Google does not provide SD card slots on its tablets and, from Android 4.4.2 onwards, it even prevents apps from writing to an SD card when you have one inserted. I don't know about Apple, but I suspect the reasons are the same.



Jim, via email

Winning prizes means sacrificing your privacy

I enter quite a lot of online competitions but I make more money through surveys. What annoys me is that the forms on competition websites ask for your full

£25
winner

You can let us know your views and opinions via:
webuser@dennis.co.uk, www.facebook.com/webusermagazine,
www.twitter.com/webusermagazine and forum.webuser.co.uk



address, mobile and home phone numbers, and your age.

They often disable automatic form-filling tools so you have to type all this information manually, and enter your email address twice. All these sites really need is your email address, because if you win, you can easily send your postal address afterwards.

Some of these sites also want you to follow them on Twitter, Facebook and other social media sites, and to subscribe to their emails. Isn't this what the Data Protection Act was designed for: to protect our information so that we don't give too much away?

Adrian Bonnington, via email

Why couldn't Google leave Gmail alone?

I run an online writers' group. We share work, messages and feedback via email. I've had a Gmail account for several years and this is the one I use for my group.

However, last week when I clicked the contacts list for my group, I discovered that Gmail, for no reason whatsoever, had decided to changed the layout. My contacts were still there - thank goodness - but as I began to set up a new list for my group, I encountered a problem.

I typed in the name of the first member and, from apparently nowhere, a whole load of strangers (all with the same name, and all from Google+) suddenly appeared on the screen.



I think this is because Google is trying to persuade me to join Google+. I'm sorry, but I have no wish to join Google+, and I'm equally sure folk with the same name as my members have no wish to join my online writers' group.

I started my group in 2011 and this is the very first time I've encountered this silly snag. Why did Google have to mess about with Gmail's layout like this? It was working perfectly fine as it was. This new Gmail design throws non-techies like me into a total spin. I just about managed to sort out the problem in the end!

Sharon Boothroyd, via email

What you say...

ARE YOU EXCITED THAT THE LAUNCH OF WINDOWS 10 HAS BEEN MOVED FORWARD TO THIS SUMMER?

No, because I'll be waiting until it's 'bedded in' and the security holes have been filled. Maybe wait a year or two.

Martin Walker @MartinWalker666

Yep, I can't wait to lose Windows 8 from my laptop. I never use the tiles, ever.

Si Mellor

Boring. Linux is better.

Mike Hingston

I unlocked the bootloader on my fiance's laptop and removed Windows 8 to install Windows 7. He's never looked back. We'll be moving to Windows 10, though, as long as we can revert back if we don't like it.

Ursula Vasey

WAS FACEBOOK CORRECT TO REMOVE THE 'I'M FEELING FAT' OPTION (bit.ly/fbfat368)?

No, it isn't right. It's another group crying. You're not the only ones on the internet - stop ruining it for the rest of us.

Paul Wallace

It's political correctness gone mad! The world is slowly turning everyone into wussies.

Rob GaffyduckGaffney @scunnumy

Crazy! They ignore anti-semitic pages and remove this!

Yve Clark

Facebook ignores so many other pages and posts that are much more offensive, yet they listen to people

who are offended by the words "feeling fat". Seems there are some strange ways of measuring what's offensive or not at Facebook headquarters.

Kenny Lowe

DO YOU THINK THE APPLE WATCH LOOKS NICE?

It isn't stunning, but it looks okay. Not sure they've nailed it, though. The new Pebble Steel (getpebble.com) is very similar.

Bari Pollard @barijohn

A triumph of form over function, I feel. I do think it looks good, but will I be lining up to buy one when my £30 M&S watch still keeps very good time and looks okay? No!

Ian Phipps

I think it looks a bit chunky compared to my LG G Watch (www.lg.com/global/gwatch), and £349 for a watch strap seems a bit much.

Derek Murray

It may look great, but I'll never buy it.

Chris Cole

WOULD YOU EVER BUY A BLACKBERRY TABLET?

Yes, I only browse on a tablet so I don't give a damn who made it.

Montgomery Bizza-Lerokolo Letsholo

Definitely not. BlackBerry cannot compete with the market. You'd need a very competitive price and specifications to sell a product with such a 'behind-the-times' brand.

Jason 'Boz' Bowyer

They should build an Android version and add extra layers of security. They won't, though. And no, I will stick to Android.

Chris Armstrong

Never. I want a Lenovo IdeaPad Yoga. It has the power of a laptop with the portability of a tablet.

Jack @iamgoldmaster

! Page 404

Barry Collins is fed up with companies locking us in with “free” trials



Why free trials rarely pay off

Of all the terms that are roundly abused by tech companies, there's only one that gets misused more than “unlimited” (advertising speak for “list of restrictions as long as your arm”), and that's “free”. The Oxford Dictionary defines “free” as “given or available without charge”, and yet customers who sign up for “free trials” often end up facing more charges than Ronnie Biggs.

Amazon is the latest company to be found guilty of perpetrating this ruse. It recently (and rightly) had its wrist slapped by the Advertising Standards Authority – “authority” being another complete misnomer as far as this Cadbury's teapot of a regulator is concerned, but that's another column. Amazon was found to have misled its customers after sending them letters advertising a “30-day free trial” of its Prime subscription service, but

neglecting to mention until the small print at the bottom that they would be automatically charged if they failed to cancel. Indeed, the letter completely failed to mention how much they would be stung for.

The Advertising Code is perfectly straightforward: marketing communications must make clear the extent of the commitment consumers must make to take advantage of a “free” offer. And yet Amazon – arguably the most consumer-friendly web retailer out there – stuck to its guns, arguing that “consumers would notice the terms” and that customers were invited to “go to the web link, where more information was clearly and prominently available”. What's more, Amazon argued, “it was common practice for promotions offering free trials for services to convert to a paid subscription unless the subscription was cancelled”. Everybody else is doing it, so why shouldn't we?

“Customers who sign up for “free trials” often end up facing more charges than Ronnie Biggs”

extortionate Sky TV subscription and decided to investigate internet-streaming services instead. There were two obvious contenders: Netflix and Amazon's LoveFilm (now rebranded Amazon Prime Instant Video). Amazon demanded credit-card details upfront to participate in the 30-day trial, Netflix didn't. Guess which one I went with and am still a happy customer with 18 months later?

The same is true of other products I use for my work. I first started using Adobe's digital photo software

Lightroom on a 30-day commitment-free trial about five years ago. I've since bought every new version and am now a paying subscriber to its Creative Cloud plan for photographers. It doesn't half fill you with confidence as a consumer when companies are so sure of their product that they reckon they can convert you into a paying customer without hoping that you'll simply forget to cancel the subscription.

Alas, this column doesn't have a happy ending. Netflix has now gone down the Amazon path of demanding a credit card before dishing out the “free” 30-day trial. I still love Netflix, not least because it locked down the price for existing customers for two whole years when it raised its monthly subscription fees for new members. But would I be a customer now if it had asked for my credit card number up front, or would I have signed up with Amazon, which already had my details stored? Netflix might catch a few people out with its rolling subscriptions, but I bet it's missing out on many more potential customers, too.



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